

CITY OF WORCESTER, MA



CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSION FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

FOURTH YEAR ACTION PLAN (JULY 1ST, 2023 – JUNE 30TH, 2024)



Prepared by:
City Manager's Executive Office of Economic Development



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Executive Summary

AP-05 Executive Summary - 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

1. Introduction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that entitlement cities prepare a Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) to receive federal housing and community development funding. The City of Worcester, MA Five-Year Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development (7/1/2020 - 6/30/2025) combines into one document the requirements of four federal programs administered by HUD - the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA), and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). The Consolidated Plan allows the City of Worcester to shape its housing and community development programs into coordinated strategies and helps inform progress toward community development. The City of Worcester must submit a full Consolidated Plan every five years; yearly action plans are required as presented herein in this City of Worcester, MA Fourth Year Action Plan (07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024).

While the City continues to make progress addressing community needs, it continues to face numerous existing and emerging needs and challenges. Updated analysis and research indicates the need for continued investment and effort around addressing affordable housing production and barriers to accessing affordable housing and trends related to aging housing stock and deferred maintenance, as well as Rapid Re-housing or Continuum of Care (CoC)-supported projects. Consultation with citizens and service providers stressed a continued need for social and human services and housing supportive services for low- to moderate-income and special needs populations including youth, recent immigrants, resettled refugees, the elderly and homeless, individuals with substance abuse and mental health challenges, and those living with HIV/AIDS.

In anticipation of declining federal entitlement grant allocations and uncertainty of federal fiscal resources moving forward, continued strategic leveraging of private investments and community-based resources are needed. As needs and issues often overlap and concentrate in neighborhoods, there is a need for more strategic, concentrated, neighborhood-based collaborations with private and community resources and cross-departmental collaborations. This is the model that the City has been implementing with an emphasis on placed-based, neighborhood focused revitalization strategies as was carried out during the last few years in the Union Hill neighborhood as well as the Green Island neighborhood. A focused, block by block approach to addressing infrastructure, housing and community development needs is being implemented in this area and proposed for other communities as part of this and any future plans that use federal entitlement grant funds.

While the City continues to emerge from the COVID-19 Pandemic, the city anticipates public health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, will continue to be felt locally into the near to mid-term. As a result, much needed Public Services that provide social, health and human services to the community will continue to be a priority during this fourth year action plan.

2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

This could be a restatement of items or a table listed elsewhere in the plan or a reference to another location. It may also contain any essential items from the housing and homeless needs assessment, the housing market analysis or the strategic plan.

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan (2020-2025) Goals address a wide variety of needs in the community. Neighborhood stabilization and revitalization is the overarching goal in the community, which is achieved through many aspects. These include the improvements of public facilities (ie neighborhood centers, senior center, etc.) and public infrastructure such as roads, sidewalks, and parks. Another goal related to neighborhood stabilization is the maintenance, preservation, and sustainability of safe and healthy affordable housing. This is achieved through rehabilitation, creation of new housing, and/or demolition or redevelopment of blighted structures.

Just as important as the physical needs of the community is the goal of providing public services for the community, which includes, but not limited to Youth educational and recreational programs, Health services (COVID-19 inclusive), Food access and security, Information and services for new immigrants, Transportation and access to public services.

In order to stay competitive and to provide economic opportunities for the community there is also a goal related to economic development and business assistance. The objective is to create and retain jobs for low and moderate income clientele, as well as making low income owned businesses competitive with technical assistance and façade improvements.

In regards to homeless programs the goals are to resolve barriers for the homeless and expand resources for homeless prevention. There is also the specialized goal of creating housing opportunities for those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan (2020-2025) Goals are as follows:

1. Affordable Housing Development & Preservation
2. Healthy and Sustainable Housing
3. Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization
4. Economic Development & Business Assistance
5. Public Services for Low-Moderate Income Persons
6. Improvement and Preservation of Public Facilities
7. Expanded Resources for Homelessness Prevention
8. Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons
9. Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS

The priority needs, objectives, and outcomes addressed by these goals are further described in AP-20, Annual Goals and Objectives, of this Fourth Year Action Plan.

3. Evaluation of past performance

This is an evaluation of past performance that helped lead the grantee to choose its goals or projects.

Regarding public service activities, a total of 19 CDBG funded programs worth \$954,620 were contracted during the third year action plan to provide services to 6,325 low- and moderate-income persons to address identified needs for health services, case management, immigration resettlement, homelessness prevention, youth programming, food and housing security, legal assistance, after school programming, recreational activities, financial assistance and elder transportation. These CDBG funds in turn leveraged \$2,228,154 in other public and private resources. Since July 2020, 21,033 LMI persons have benefited from 71 public services programs contracted with \$2.97 million in CDBG funds (which in turn leveraged \$6.13 million in other public and private resources).

CDBG funds help City of Worcester provide much needed public facility improvements. During the last year, \$1,880,240 in CDBG funds were allocated to public facilities improvement projects including \$180,240 for African Community Education (ACE) - Facility Gym Renovation, \$150,000 for Preservation Worcester – Salisbury House Historic Preservation, \$250,000 for Green Island Phase IV Street Improvements, \$300,000 for Low-Mod Neighborhood Street Improvements, and \$500,000 to purchase a new Fire Dept. Water Pumper Truck. Since July 2020, \$6.37 million in CDBG funds were utilized on public facilities ranging from 5 streets reconstructed, 3 firefighting trucks purchased and 11 public facilities (including ADA bathroom upgrades, roof repairs, kitchen renovations, gym air conditioning, retile swimming pool, elevator modernization, parking lot reconstruction/repaving, and historic preservation).

CDBG funds help to incentivize business creation, expansion, and retention through loans, grants, and technical assistance. During the last year, 8 businesses were assisted with \$107,620 in CDBG and 39 businesses employing 98 employees were assisted with \$397,500 in CDBG-CV. Since 2020, the City has expended \$3,095,120 in CDBG to assist 459 businesses that have generated or retained 836 jobs for low-and moderate-income persons through low- and moderate-income persons. These CDBG funds in turn leveraged \$2.5 million in private investment.

Affordable housing activities made steady progress in meeting the outcomes outlined by the 5-Year Consolidated Plan Goals. In conjunction with the City of Worcester Department of Inspectional Services (DIS), one (1) large blighted building is in progress of being demolished with \$7,199 of Community Development Block CDBG funds. The Systematic Housing Inspections Program (“Sweeps” program) run in conjunction with DIS utilized \$93,330 in CDBG to inspect 1,098 units of housing. The first time homebuyer down payment assistance program utilized \$5,000 to assist one (1) households with a purchase of their first home. This assistance is capped at \$5,000 per person for this activity. \$364,213 of CDBG funds and \$896,150 of HOME funds were expended toward the rehab 46 housing units (19 homeowner units and 27 rental units) and the construction of 3 new home owner units and 17 new rental units. These funds were used to assist with energy improvements, reduce lead hazards, repair code violations, and for safe and healthy rental units for low- to moderate- income populations. Due to

COVID there was less activity in traditional housing activities, but with the recovery funds allowing none traditional funding mechanism with the funds we were able to fund other activities. This includes the Emergency Rental Assistance program, which provided rental assistance for those affected by the pandemic. \$857,334.27 in CDBG-CV funds were used to assist 476 households pay rental arrears. This successful program will continue as long as the funding stream will allow.

ESG funds assisted the City of Worcester in providing funding to 7 agencies with 8 projects in the amount of \$ 385,567 . the City of Worcester’s Health & Human Services received \$ 62,614.80 for their Homeless Outreach & Advocacy Program. Veterans Inc. received \$ 20,000 for their Emergency Shelter/Essential Services. Open Sky (formerly known as The Bridge of Central Massachusetts) received \$ 70,000 to assist with their Homeless Initiatives Program. SMOC (South Middlesex Opportunity Council) received \$90,000 to utilize between 2 programs: Rapid Rehousing (\$50,000 and Triage Case Management \$ 40,000) CMHA (Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance) received 15,000 to continue their HMIS (Homeless Management Information System). Newly to receive funding was Dismas House (Father Brooks) in the amount of \$ 11,500. Dismas House assists those re-entering society after being recently incarcerated. LIFT (Living in Freedom Together) received \$ 41,453 to assist with their HARBOR Program. The Harbor Program (Healthcare, Advocacy, Room, Board, Outreach & Rehousing) provides a 15 bed low barrier-maximum shelter for survivors of the sex trade. ESG Annual entitlement dollars provided 196 Veterans Emergency Services/Essential Services & 12 with shelter. SMOC assisted 102 clients with Permanent Housing, 266 with Case Management services, 685 with Emergency Shelter, HHS assisted 320 with access to agency and community based services and 60 clients received Housing Stability Case Management. The Bridge provided services to 30 individuals/families by their HIP program. LIFT assisted 90 individuals with shelter.

HOPWA funding assisted 4 agencies with 5 programs in the amount of \$ 793,000. AIDS Project Worcester’s TBRA (Tenancy Based Rental Assistance) Program received \$60,000 and its Housing Services Program in the amount of \$ 191,333.33. Making Opportunity Count (MOC) received \$ 241,422 for their CARE AIDS Project in Northern Worcester County. Advancing Connecticut Together (ACT) received \$77,120 for their HOPWA East Program to assist clients in Windham County Connecticut. Additionally Community Healthlink (CHL) received \$107,483 for the Maranda’s House Project. Annual HOPWA entitlement funding provided services to 20 clients received Rental Assistance (first, last, security) 10 clients have received Tenant Based Rental Assistance, 80 Clients received Housing Supportive Services, (STRMU-Short Term Rental, Mortgage Utility) assistance and 13 clients received Supportive Housing services.

4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

Beginning in the summer of 2019, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) engaged in a citizen participation process to identify community needs and provide community input on activities and

programs to fund. Ten community needs assessment public meetings were held in different parts of the City, with at least one in each of the City Council districts. The meetings were attended by 141 total participants from neighborhoods with underserved, low-income, diverse, and minority residents. All meetings were intentionally held at locations accessible for potential and actual beneficiaries. The public meetings were advertised broadly through the City's media office as well as through door-to-door neighborhood outreach with at least one bilingual staff member. At each of the meetings, two bilingual staff persons were present that were able to provide translation and/or facilitation in Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition, a special public hearing was also held in the Green Island neighborhood in July 2019 to focus attention on the needs of that, very low- income, inner-city neighborhood (65 persons participated).

The Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan informed the four year (2023-2024) annual action plan outreach/funding recommendation process. The Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) traditionally serves as the formal citizen body that provides input on funding applications submitted as part of the city's CDBG Request For Proposal (RFP) process. The CDAC is a citizen advisory committee comprised of ten members, with two from each of Worcester's five council districts. This year, the CDAC met remotely six times in February – April 2023 to evaluate, review and rate CDBG proposals for Public Services, Public Facilities and Improvements, and City Interdepartmental applicants that submitted proposals in response to this year's RFP, which was issued on December 1, 2022 and due by January 10, 2023.

The HOPWA Advisory Committee vetted HOPWA proposals. This committee is composed of experts in community health and the HIV/AIDS field in Worcester County and Connecticut. The process is similar to CDAC in its review, including holding a public meeting to introduce the HOPWA process and guidelines, a technical assistance meeting for interested applicants, and a review and ranking session held in public at City Hall. Recommendations are then sent to City Administration for approval.

ESG proposals, vetted by the ESG RFP Review Committee comprised of members of the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care (CoC). The ESG RFP Review Committee followed a similar process to the CDAC in its review, including holding a public meeting to introduce the ESG process and guidelines, a technical assistance meeting for interested applicants, and an RFP review and ranking session at City Hall. Recommendations then went to City Administration for approval.

5. Summary of public comments

This could be a brief narrative summary or reference an attached document from the Citizen Participation section of the Con Plan.

In conformity HUD directives, the City of Worcester Draft Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development (2020-2025) Fourth Year Action Plan (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) was made available for a public review and comment period for at least 30 days from May 12, 2023 - June 13, 2023. As advertised in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette, a hardcopy of said Draft Consolidated Submission Fourth Year Annual Action Plan was available at the City of Worcester, Executive Office of

Economic Development (EOED), City Hall, 455 Main Street, 4th Floor, Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608 (open 8:30 AM - 5 PM, normal working days) and was posted on the City's website. A public hearing was scheduled by EOED at City Hall for May 31, 2023, to review the draft plan and provide an opportunity for interested parties to ask questions and provide comments.

The Draft Consolidated Plan / Fourth Action Plan will be transmitted to the Worcester City Council on May 23, 2023, for review at public hearings of the Council's Public Health and Human Services Committee. Pending the committee's vote of approval, the recommendations contained in this Fourth Year Action Plan are expected to be voted for approval by the full City Council at their public meeting in June 2023.

Persons wishing to submit comments regarding the City of Worcester Draft Annual Action Plan funding recommendations were asked to submit them in writing to the City of Worcester, Executive Office of Economic Development, City Hall, 455 Main Street, 4th Floor, Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608 or by email to development@worchesterma.gov, by June 13, 2023.

6. Summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them.

All comments were accepted to the plan.

7. Summary

For the Fourth Year Action Plan, the City of Worcester will provide a blueprint to address the needs of low and moderate populations that were identified from an extensive community needs analysis and a robust citizen outreach/community public meetings process. Through Department of Housing and Urban Development funding working in concert with other public and private resources the plan will provide for the development and preservation of affordable housing, promote healthy and sustainable housing, provide for neighborhood stabilization and revitalization, promote economic development and assist businesses, provide public services for low-moderate Income persons, improve and preserve public facilities, expand resources for homelessness prevention, resolve barriers to housing for homeless persons, and provide housing opportunities for persons with HIV/AIDS.

PR-05 Lead & Responsible Agencies – 91.200(b)

1. Agency/entity responsible for preparing/administering the Consolidated Plan

Describe the agency/entity responsible for preparing the Consolidated Plan and those responsible for administration of each grant program and funding source.

Agency Role	Name	Department/Agency
CDBG Administrator	WORCESTER	Office of Economic Development
HOPWA Administrator	WORCESTER	Office of Economic Development
HOME Administrator	WORCESTER	Office of Economic Development
ESG Administrator	WORCESTER	Office of Economic Development

Table 1 – Responsible Agencies

Narrative (optional)

The City Manager's Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) is the lead administering agency for the City of Worcester, MA, Five-Year Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development (2020-2025) and the Fourth Year Action Plan (07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024). EOED administers CDBG, HOME, HOPWA and ESG entitlement formula grants for the City of Worcester, MA.

Consolidated Plan Public Contact Information

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AP-10 Consultation – 91.100, 91.200(b), 91.215(I)

1. Introduction

The City of Worcester’s Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) embarked on the development of a new Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan in the summer of 2019, which in turn informed the development of this Fourth Year (2023-2024) Action Plan. As the lead agency of the planning process, EOED hosted a series of neighborhood meetings; consulted with non-profit organizations, City staff, housing providers; posted public notices; held public hearings; and advertised public review, draft plan comment periods. Organizations and community stakeholders representing the following segments of the community were involved in the process:

- Housing Services and Assisted Housing – Group and individual consultations with for-profit and non-profit developers and the Worcester Housing Authority.
- Children and Youth Services – Focus group with service providers.
- Elderly Services – Consultation with City of Worcester Office of Elder Affairs and the Worcester Senior Center.
- Health Services – Worcester Public Health Division's Community Health Improvement Plan
- Update Public Process and ongoing collaboration through the Worcester County Continuum of Care.
- Persons with Disabilities – Consultation with City of Worcester Office of Human Rights and Disabilities.
- Persons with HIV/AIDS and their Families – Consultations with service providers.
- Low-Income Persons – Focus group with providers and funders of basic needs and safety net services.
- Homeless Persons including Veterans and Persons with Special Needs – Coordination with agencies and other governmental entities involved in the Worcester County Continuum of Care, including coordination with the following City of Worcester municipal departments/divisions: Public Health Division, Office of Emergency Operations, Health and Inspectional Services Division, Workforce Development, and the City Manager’s Office on Human Rights and Disabilities.
- Publicly Funded Institutions and Systems of Care – Coordination with corrections facilities, medical providers and mental health institutions including the Worcester County Sherriff’s Office, UMass Memorial Medical Center, Community Healthlink, local detox centers and the Department of Mental Health through the Worcester County Continuum of Care.
- State and Local Health and Child Welfare Agencies – Consultation to identify the addresses of housing units with lead-poisoned children. Ongoing collaboration with the MA Department of Public Health and the Worcester Public Health Division.
- Regional and Planning Efforts – Consultation with the Central MA Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and the Central MA Workforce Investment Board.

Provide a concise summary of the jurisdiction’s activities to enhance coordination between public and assisted housing providers and private and governmental health, mental health and service agencies (91.215(I))

EOED works to foster strong relationships and enhance cooperation and coordination between public and private service and housing providers. Development of the Consolidated Plan and this Fourth Year

Action Plan have benefitted from input from a broad range of stakeholders who contributed through interviews and focus groups, in addition to those represented at public meetings and hearings. Entities participating in the process included agencies and groups with expertise in areas such as housing, youth services, case management, mental health, education, employment assistance, basic needs, and health services. As a means of gaining input, individual and group consultations were held with providers of public and affordable housing, and services for homeless, special needs, and low-income populations. The City of Worcester actively participates in ongoing efforts to enhance coordination with private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies in order to foster economic development. EOED, through the Business Assistance Division, plays a leadership role in the Worcester Business Resource Alliance (WBRA), a centralized network of business professionals, technical assistance providers, lenders, and community development organizations that collectively provide services to entrepreneurs and small business owners and managers. EOED also meets regularly with neighborhood business associations, and coordinates with the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce and Worcester Business Development Corporation. At the state level, EOED has strong partnerships with the Mass Office of Business Development and MassDevelopment, as well as relationships with the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center and the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP).

Describe coordination with the Continuum of Care and efforts to address the needs of homeless persons (particularly chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans, and unaccompanied youth) and persons at risk of homelessness.

Substantial consultation with Worcester area homeless service providers and clients has been a cornerstone of ongoing planning and efforts to address the unique needs of multiple priority subpopulations experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. As part of the Consolidated Planning process referenced above, the City hosted a consultation workshop for homeless service providers to consider the evolution of Worcester's system in recent years, discuss current service access, and envision improvements to assist target populations. The workshop groups focused on three areas: 1) Access to Housing 2) Supportive Services 3) System Coordination. As a result of consultation efforts, coordination is ongoing related to these target populations: chronically and episodically homeless households with or without children, veterans, unaccompanied youth, and people living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Worcester is increasingly focusing on the Unaccompanied Youth population as a result of the Point-in-Time Survey on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth that has been conducted annually since 2009. The survey has helped the community gauge the extent of the problem, and garners resources to serve the often invisible population of homeless youth. The Survey on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth has been spearheaded by Worcester's Teen Housing Task Force, now formally known as the Compass Network with 13 partner agencies, and has raised significant community awareness. Beginning in 2014, the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) now implements a state-wide survey on homeless youth via the local Continuum of Care Programs in the state. The MA ICHH Youth Point-in-Time survey was modeled after best practices in the Compass Network's efforts to understand

the extent of risk factors associated with young adult housing instability in Worcester.

The City of Worcester's role through the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) is to coordinate and monitor the system of housing and services for the homeless in Worcester, working closely with community and governmental stakeholders through the following efforts:

- o The City coordinates housing and service policies in conjunction with the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA) via its advisory role on the CoC Board and planning process, and chairing the Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee for the local CoC.
- o The City partially funds and monitors the performance of Triage and Assessment, along with Diversion services, for Homeless Individuals. This provides valuable information regarding housing and service system performance and enables consistent cooperation in quality improvement for service operations.
- o The City continues to match funds for the Worcester County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that provides valuable data on the number and demographics of the homeless, and service outcomes in partnership with the CoC Lead Agency: CMHA.
- o The City continues to compile, analyze, and act on program monitoring reports obtained from funding agencies for all homeless housing and service programs.

Describe consultation with the Continuum(s) of Care that serves the jurisdiction's area in determining how to allocate ESG funds, develop performance standards for and evaluate outcomes of projects and activities assisted by ESG funds, and develop funding, policies and procedures for the operation and administration of HMIS

Planning and coordination efforts of the Worcester County Continuum of Care continue to have a positive impact area-wide. The CoC's on-going coordination with organizations that provide housing and supportive services for special needs populations including elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and homeless persons, continue to allow facilitation with all agencies. Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA) has been designated to lead the annual CoC planning process, supported by the rest of Worcester County by chief executives of the county's three entitlement cities (Worcester, Fitchburg, and Leominster). The Continuum of Care board includes a wide constituency based on HUD Guidance of Establishing and Operating a Continuum of Care. Sub-committees within the Continuum operate accordingly related to Veterans Services, HMIS, Data Management and monitor and outcome evaluations. The working groups, all focus on improving the region's coordinated entry system for homeless individuals, while the closed-referral system for family housing operates in its own coordinated entry system.

Correctional facilities, medical providers, mental health institutions (Worcester County Sherriff's Office, UMass Memorial Medical Center, Community HealthLink, local detox centers and the Department of Mental Health) incorporate their discharge planning into the coordinated entry system with CoC partners. Evaluation of these working groups and subcommittees give insight into future funding, policies and outcome standards in serving homeless populations.

Guided by two principals a) an open & inclusive process with broad-based participation by citizens and stakeholders throughout the county. And b) a comprehensive approach which develops, coordinates

and integrates a system of care for homeless individuals and families, including major sub-populations such as the chronically homeless, mentally-ill, substance abusers, persons with HIV/AIDS, veterans, victims of domestic violence, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly.

The planning process' key feature include: active year-round planning, facilitating completion of planned activities. A committee structure that divides tasks among specialized groups, organized around participants' interests and expertise with work plans for the committees to ensure timely completion of necessary tasks. One vote per agency, encourages broad participation and prevents dominance by any particular agency. A sub-regional process that helps ensure equitable treatment among geographic service areas, with monitoring & evaluation of programs to ensure accountability and optimal service quality. Lastly, there is widespread dissemination of information about the planning process that facilitates maximum participation

In the past 5 years, ESG funds have been used for prevention, rapid rehousing, street outreach, emergency shelter operations and housing navigation systems to serve major sub-populations represented in our community. The decision to allocate funds to these activities is confirmed by the gaps and resources currently available through the federal HEARTH act.

2. Describe Agencies, groups, organizations and others who participated in the process and describe the jurisdiction's consultations with housing, social service agencies and other entities

Table 2 – Agencies, groups, organizations who participated

1	Agency/Group/Organization	CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING ALLIANCE, INC.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Children Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-Victims of Domestic Violence Services-homeless Services-Employment Service-Fair Housing Regional organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Needs - Veterans Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	CMHA is the lead agency for the annual Continuum of Care (CoC) planning process. This collaborative process involves ongoing consultations with the City and organizations that provide housing and support services for special needs populations including elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS and homeless persons. These consultations inform the needs assessment, strategic plan, and annual action plan updates. A Housing Navigation System has also been implemented.

2	Agency/Group/Organization	SMOC-GREATER WORCESTER HOUSING CONNECTION-RAPID REHOUSING
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-homeless
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Consulted on the extent of chronic homelessness and homelessness for people with disabilities. Outcomes include improved coordination of services for homeless households without children, chronically homeless, and improvement on Coordinated Assessment, Entry, and Housing Placement.
3	Agency/Group/Organization	DISMAS HOUSE
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services - Housing Services-homeless Services-Health Services - Victims Regional organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homelessness Needs Assists recently incarcerated individuals with integration back into society
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Consulted on the needs of the recently incarcerated integrating back into society. Program allows reintegration techniques, counseling, job training.

4	Agency/Group/Organization	COMMUNITY HEALTHLINK, INC.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Services-Health Health Agency Regional organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs HOPWA Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Agency is a HOPWA subrecipient and major recipient of Continuum of Care grants. Consulted at workshop with service providers. Anticipated outcomes include increased coordination with the CoC for monitoring and evaluation, services for people with disabilities, basic homeless needs, and coordinated entry.
5	Agency/Group/Organization	SMOC-GREATER WORCESTER HOUSING CONNECTION-QUEEN STREET SHELTER
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services – Emergency Shelter Services-homeless Services-connection to services/agencies
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs Homelessness Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy

	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Agency is a subrecipient of ESG and HUD Continuum of Care funds. Consulted at workshop with service providers and during community input meetings. Anticipated outcomes include increased coordination for homelessness services and services.
6	Agency/Group/Organization	Open Sky Community Services
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services - Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Services-Health Health Agency Regional organization
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homeless Needs - Families with children Homelessness Needs - Veterans Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth Homelessness Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Agency is a subrecipient of ESG and HUD Continuum of Care funds. Consulted at workshop with service providers and during community input meetings. Anticipated outcomes include increased coordination for homelessness services and services.

7	Agency/Group/Organization	AIDS Project Worcester
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment Health Agency
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs HOPWA Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	HOPWA subrecipient consulted at workshop with homeless service providers. Increased coordination for non-homeless special needs and the homeless strategy.

8	Agency/Group/Organization	Advancing Connecticut Together
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment Health Agency
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs HOPWA Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	HOPWA subrecipient consulted at workshop with homeless service providers. Increased coordination for non-homeless special needs and the homeless strategy.

9	Agency/Group/Organization	Making Opportunity Count
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Housing Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment Health Agency
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs HOPWA Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	HOPWA subrecipient consulted at workshop with homeless service providers. Increased coordination for non-homeless special needs and the homeless strategy.

10	Agency/Group/Organization	Living in Freedom Together – Harbor Program
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Shelter/Housing Services-Persons Fleeing Sex Trade, Exploitation Services-Persons with Disabilities Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs HOPWA Strategy Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Agency is a subrecipient of ESG and Continuum of Care funds. Consulted at workshop with service providers and during community input meetings. Anticipated outcomes include increased coordination for homelessness services and services.

11	Agency/Group/Organization	Veterans Inc.
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Veterans Shelter Services-Veteran with Disabilities Services-Veteran with HIV/AIDS Services-homeless Veterans Services-Health Services-Education Services-Employment
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Housing Need Assessment Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless Homelessness Strategy Non-Homeless Special Needs Anti-poverty Strategy
	Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?	Agency is a subrecipient of ESG and Continuum of Care funds. Consulted at workshop with service providers and during community input meetings. Anticipated outcomes include increased coordination for homelessness services and services for Veterans
12	Agency/Group/Organization	City of Worcester Health & Human Services
	Agency/Group/Organization Type	Services – Individuals, Families, Elderly Services – Chronically Homeless Services – Health Services - HIV/AIDS Services - Disabilities
	What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?	Anti-poverty Strategy

<p>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</p>	<p>Subrecipient participation in the workshop for service providers and the community needs public hearing helped inform the priority needs and goals of the Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plans.</p>
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Identify any Agency Types not consulted and provide rationale for not consulting

The City of Worcester developed its Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plans as a result of extensive consultation with housing, social and health service providers, local and regional agencies, and the Worcester Housing Authority. The City has consulted with all of agencies known to be relevant to the Consolidated Plan.

Other local/regional/state/federal planning efforts considered when preparing the Plan

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Continuum of Care	Central MA Housing Alliance	The Continuum of Care Action Plan is an integral part of the City's efforts to address homelessness, including expanding resources for homeless prevention, resolving barriers to housing for homeless persons, and participating in a coordinated entry system.
Worcester Housing Authority 5-Year and Annual Plan	Worcester Housing Authority	The Worcester Housing Authority is responsible for providing decent, safe, and sanitary housing for very low- to moderate-income households, which overlaps with the Strategic Plan goals related to affordable housing and providing access to public housing.
Green Worcester Sustainability and Resilience Strategic Plan (2022)	City of Worcester Department of Sustainability & Resilience	Supports the integration of sustainability and resilience into all functions of City via policies, projects and initiatives with goal of making Worcester the greenest mid-size city in the country.
Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?

Boosting Broadband: Access, Performance, Improvements, and Funding Report (2022)	Worcester Regional Research Bureau, Inc.– Research in the Public Interest	Expands upon findings of Worcester Research Bureau’s Broadening Broadband Report (2020) through analysis of three years of data, examination of internet connection speed, and public school student access in order to assess how has broadband access in Worcester changed in three years, how is the current broadband infrastructure performing, what can be done to improve broadband in Worcester, how are federal and state governments supporting broadband access initiatives.
Draft ADA Self-Evaluation (2014)	City of Worcester	The goals of the Strategic Plan include public facility improvements that address the large number of aging buildings and other facilities that pose barriers to residents with disabilities.
CMWIB Strategic Plan FY 2015 to 2017	Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board	The goals of the Strategic Plan in the Consolidated Plan overlap with the CMWIB goals related to building the skills of the workforce and fostering economic development.
Greater Worcester Region CHIP	Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance	The goals of the Strategic Plan align with the Greater Worcester Region Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) in order to improve upon the services provided to residents and to strengthen the public health system.
Housing Market Study (2012)	City of Worcester	This report helps guide the Strategic Plan goals related to affordable housing development and preservation as well as healthy and sustainable housing.
Analysis of Impediments to Affordable Housing 2020	City of Worcester	This report helps guide the Strategic Plan goals related to affordable housing development and preservation.
HOPWA Needs Analysis (2011)	City of Worcester	This report informed the HOPWA Annual Action Plans.
Union Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Action Plan	City of Worcester and Worcester Business Development Corporation	The Union Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Action Plan (2014) guides revitalization efforts in the Union Hill neighborhood, a geographic priority area identified in the Strategic Plan.

Table 3 – Other local / regional / federal planning efforts

Narrative (optional)

The City of Worcester consulted and will continue to coordinate with the Central MA Workforce Investment Board and the Central MA Regional Planning Commission with regard to needs that go beyond the local jurisdiction, such as workforce development, transportation, and regional housing planning issues. Additionally, the City has a history of participation in state-wide efforts to eliminate childhood lead poisoning and has taken a lead role in the local coordination among critical agencies. The EOED collaborates with the MA Department of Public Health and the Worcester Department of Public Health, and is also actively involved with the Worcester Green and Healthy Homes Coalition (WGHHHC), a joint effort of public and private agencies, grassroots organizations, and concerned citizens committed to eliminating home health hazards, promoting energy efficiency, and improving health and quality of life in Worcester. Additionally, the EOED is enhancing collaboration with Worcester's Department of Public Health and Worcester Public Schools to provide in-home interventions for school age children that have direct health issues related to housing.

In conformity HUD directives, the City of Worcester Draft Consolidated Submission for Community Planning and Development (2020-2025) Fourth Year Action Plan (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) was made available for a public review and comment period for at last 30 days from May 12, 2023 - June 13, 2023. As advertised in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette, a hardcopy of said Draft Consolidated Submission Fourth Year Annual Action Plan was available at the City of Worcester, Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED), City Hall, 455 Main Street, 4th Floor, Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608 (open 8:30 AM - 5 PM, normal working days) and was posted on the City's website. A public hearing was scheduled by EOED at City Hall for May 31, 2023, to review the draft plan and provide an opportunity for interested parties to ask questions and provide comments.

The Draft Consolidated Plan / Fourth Action Plan will be transmitted to the Worcester City Council on May 23, 2023, for review at public hearings of the Council's Public Health and Human Services Committee. Pending the committee's vote of approval, the recommendations contained in this Fourth Year Action Plan are expected to be voted for approval by the full City Council at their public meeting in June 2023.

Persons wishing to submit comments regarding the City of Worcester Draft Annual Action Plan funding recommendations were asked to submit them in writing to the City of Worcester, Executive Office of Economic Development, City Hall, 455 Main Street, 4th Floor, Room 404, Worcester, MA 01608 or by email to development@worcesterma.gov, by June 13, 2023.

AP-12 Participation – 91.105, 91.200(c)

1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal-setting

Beginning in the summer of 2019, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) engaged in a citizen participation process to identify community needs and provide community input on activities and programs to fund. Ten community needs assessment public meetings were held in different parts of the City, with at least one in each of the City Council districts. The meetings were attended by 141 total participants from neighborhoods with underserved, low-income, diverse, and minority residents. All meetings were intentionally held at locations accessible for potential and actual beneficiaries. The public meetings were advertised broadly through the City's media office as well as through door-to-door neighborhood outreach with at least one bilingual staff member. At each of the meetings, two bilingual staff persons were present that were able to provide translation and/or facilitation in Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition, a special public hearing was also held in the Green Island neighborhood in July 2019 to focus attention on the needs of that, very low-income, inner-city neighborhood (65 persons participated). The Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan informed the four year (2023-2024) annual action plan outreach/funding recommendation process. The Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) traditionally serves as the formal citizen body that provides input on funding applications submitted as part of the city's CDBG Request For Proposal (RFP) process. The CDAC is a citizen advisory committee comprised of ten members, with two from each of Worcester's five council districts. This year, the CDAC met remotely five times in February – April 2023 to evaluate, review and rate CDBG proposals for Public Services, Public Facilities and Improvements, and City Interdepartmental applicants that submitted proposals in response to this year's RFP, which was issued on December 1, 2022 and due by January 10, 2023. While the CDAC issues initial advisory recommendations on funding allocations, it is the city administration, through the city manager, that ultimately recommends which CDBG projects and activities to fund which form the basis of the annual action plan.

HOPWA proposals were vetted by the city administration together with the HOPWA Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of experts in community health and the HIV/AIDS field in Worcester County and Connecticut. The process was similar to CDAC in its review, including holding a remote public meeting to introduce the HOPWA process and guidelines, and to review and rate HOPWA proposals. ESG proposals were vetted by an ESG RFP Review Committee that was comprised of members of the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care (CoC), and local funders of such social services such as the United Way. The ESG RFP Review Committee also followed a similar process to the CDAC in its review, including holding a remote public meeting to introduce the ESG process and guidelines, and to review and rate ESG proposals.

Citizen Participation Outreach

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Newspaper ad, other media, direct correspondence	Non-English Speaking - Specify other language: Spanish Non-targeted/broad community	12/1/22 Bilingual newspaper ad, city web posting & direct email notification to 319 contacts: Request for Proposals available online for CDBG, HOPWA, ESG for programs to be funded 7/1/23 - 6/30/24.	n/a	All comments and questions were entertained (due 1/10/23)	http://www.worcesterma.gov/housing-neighborhood-development/community-development-block-grants/policies-procedures

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
2	Other media	Non-targeted/broad community	Technical assistance / Funding Overview: Online PowerPoint slide presentation posted 12/1/22 on CDBG, HOPWA, and ESG program specifics and grant eligibility requirements.	Provide information on HUD programs and RFP applications for potential applicants	All comments and questions were entertained (due 1/10/23)	http://www.worcesterma.gov/housing-neighborhood-development/community-development-block-grants/policies-procedures
3	Public Meeting Filmed for City Gov't Access Channel TV rebroadcasts	Non-targeted/broad community	Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) virtual meeting 2/6/23. Attendance: 7 CDAC, 3 city staff.	Brief overview of Yr 49 RFP applications received. Discussion of process schedule and steps for CDAC.	All comments and questions were entertained.	https://playchampds.com/worcesterma/event/1644

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
4	Public Hearing Filmed for City Gov Access Channel TV rebroadcasts	Non-targeted/broad community	Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) virtual meeting 2/13/23. Attendance: 6 CDAC, 3 city staff.	Discussion of Yr 49 all Public Services Applications received.	All comments were received.	https://playchampds.com/worcesterma/event/1665
5	Public Meeting Filmed for City Gov't Access Channel TV rebroadcasts	Non-targeted/broad community	Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) virtual meeting 2/27/23. Attendance: 7 CDAC, 3 city staff.	Discussion of all Yr 49 Public Facility Renovations and City Interdepartmental Applications received.	All comments were received.	https://playchampds.com/worcesterma/event/1675

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
6	Public Meeting Filmed for City Gov't Access Channel TV rebroadcasts	Non-targeted/broad community	Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) virtual meeting 3/13/23. Attendance: 7 CDAC, 3 city staff.	Discussion of RFP Scoring Rubric and Instruction Sheet; next steps.	All comments were received.	https://playchampds.com/worcesterma/event/1693
7	Public Meeting Filmed for City Gov't Access Channel TV rebroadcasts	Public Meeting Filmed for City Gov't Access Channel TV rebroadcasts	Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) virtual meeting 4/13/23. Attendance: 6 CDAC, 2 city staff.	Review Applicant Scores; Discuss Content of Proposed Draft CDAC Letter to City Manager.	All comments were received.	https://playchampds.com/worcesterma/event/1737

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
8	Virtual Public Meeting	Non-targeted/broad community	HOPWA Advisory Committee virtual meeting. Attendance: HOPWA Committee comprised of experts in community health and HIV/AIDS field in Worcester County Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area, city staff.	Review HOPWA process, guidelines, technical assistance for interested applicants, public review and ranking of RFPs.	All comments were received.	http://www.worcesterma.gov/housing-neighborhood-development/community-development-block-grants/policies-procedures

Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach

Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied

Federal funds will be used to leverage other public and private resources in housing, public facilities, public services, and economic development areas. Matching fund requirements, along with the needed documentation are specified in the subrecipient agreements. Matching funds include non-federal cash sources, infrastructure, appraised land/real property, and site preparation construction materials, and donated labor. The City and its program partners will seek funds from the following sources to support the goals identified in the ConPlan: Project-based Section 8 certificates through the Worcester Housing Authority, Low-income housing tax credits, project financing at favorable interest rates from MassHousing and local lenders, and private contributions to subrecipients.

The City of Worcester will continue to identify funding from the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, operated by the Department of Housing and Community Development as a source of additional match. In order to meet its ESG match requirements, the City of Worcester requires all ESG subrecipients to demonstrate a 100% match using other eligible federal, state, local or private resources.

If appropriate, describe publically owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan

The Non-Housing Community Development Needs Analysis in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan provides a description of the needs associated with publicly owned land and property. The City of Worcester owns over 4.5 million square feet of buildings and facilities that either directly service residents, or exist to house activities that service residents. Many of these buildings and facilities may be used to address needs identified in the Conplan, yet many of the facilities are also in need of improvements due to old age, deferred maintenance, and heavy use.

In an effort to address public facilities goals contained in the 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan \$1,991,710 in CDBG funds have been allocated in the Fourth Year Action Plan to improve streets, sidewalks, and other forms of eligible public infrastructure within eligible low and moderate income neighborhoods (in tandem with improvements made by other city departments, public and private partners).

All CDBG funded public service activities operate out of facilities that are located within and have the vast majority of the clients that they serve come from the Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts. Beneficiaries to be served through three public facilities improvement projects to be funded through CDBG during the Fourth Year Action plan are the African Community Education Center – Gym Renovation for \$195,000 (added to \$180,240 funded last year), Boys and Girls Club – Flooring Rehab for \$86,754, and Friendly House – Core Facility ADA Accessibility Project for \$89,522.

CDBG funded economic development activities will continue to be used for façade improvement and programs that support small business growth and aesthetic improvements to key corridors in distressed areas, retain existing jobs, and create new jobs.

Discussion

Overall the projected trend is a 2-10% reduction of Federal Funds in the remaining two years of the five year Conplan in order to address identified priority needs

Expected Resources

AP-15 Expected Resources – 91.220(c)(1,2)

Introduction

The following are the anticipated resources the City is expected to receive from CDBG, HOME, HOPWA, and ESG programs. CDBG funds will be used for housing, public improvements, and public service activities. The HOME program is mainly used for new housing unit production. CDBG decreased by 3.7%, HOME Program decreased by 1.5%. The HOPWA program was increased by 9.1%. This program is used for case management and rental assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Emergency Solutions Grant is decreased by 5.1% year over year. ESG funds are used primarily for homeless prevention and reducing barriers to housing for the homeless population.

Anticipated Resources

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
CDBG	public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Economic Development Housing Public Improvements Public Services	4,077,241	75,000	0	4,152,241	4,152,241	3.7% decrease year over year.

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
HOME	public - federal	Acquisition Homebuyer assistance Homeowner rehab Multifamily rental new construction Multifamily rental rehab New construction for ownership TBRA	1,817,821	15,000	2,670,240	4,503,061	4,503,061	1.5% decrease year over year.
HOPWA	public - federal	Permanent housing in facilities Permanent housing placement Short term or transitional housing facilities STRMU Supportive services TBRA	733,016.00	0	197,002	996,795	996,795	6.6% increase year over year. FY22 to FY 23 there is a 1.056% increase

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Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
ESG	public - federal	Conversion and rehab for transitional housing Financial Assistance Overnight shelter Rapid re-housing (rental assistance) Rental Assistance Services Transitional housing	392,016	0	160,003	531,992	531,992.00	2.3% increase year over year. From FY22 to FY 23 there is a 1.004% decrease.

Table 5 - Expected Resources – Priority Table

Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied

Federal funds will be used to leverage other public and private resources in the housing, public facilities, public services, and economic development areas. Matching fund requirements, along with the needed documentation, are specified in the subrecipient agreements. Matching funds include non-federal cash sources, infrastructure, appraised land/real property, and site preparation, construction materials, and donated labor. The City and its program partners will seek funds from the following sources to support the goals identified in this ConPlan: Project-based Section 8 certificates through the Worcester Housing Authority, Low-income housing tax credits, project financing at favorable interest rates from the MassHousing and local lenders, and private contributions to subrecipients.

The City of Worcester will continue to identify funding from the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, operated by the Dept. of Housing and Community Development, as a source of additional match. In order to meet its ESG match requirements, the City of Worcester requires all ESG subrecipients to demonstrate a 100% match using other eligible federal, state, local, or private resources.

If appropriate, describe publically owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan

The Non-Housing Community Development Needs Analysis in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan provides a description of the needs associated with publicly owned land and property. The City of Worcester owns over 4.5 million square feet of buildings and facilities that either directly service residents, or exist to house activities that service residents. Many of these buildings and facilities may be used to address needs identified in the Conplan, yet many of the facilities are also in need of improvements due to old age, deferred maintenance, and heavy use.

In an effort to address public facilities goals contained in the 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan \$1,991,710 in CDBG funds have been allocated in the Fourth Year Action Plan to improve streets, sidewalks, and other forms of eligible public infrastructure within eligible low and moderate income neighborhoods (in tandem with improvements made by other city departments, public and private partners).

All CDBG funded public service activities operate out of facilities that are located within and have the vast majority of the clients that they serve come from the Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts. Beneficiaries to be served through three public facilities improvement projects to be funded through CDBG during the Fourth Year Action plan are the African Community Education Center – Gym Renovation for \$195,000 (added to \$180,240 funded last year), Boys and Girls Club – Flooring Rehab for \$86,754, and Friendly House – Core Facility ADA Accessibility Project for \$89,522.

CDBG funded economic development activities will continue to be used for façade improvement and programs that support small business growth and aesthetic improvements to key corridors in distressed areas, retain existing jobs, and create new jobs.

Public Facility – Public Safety Upgrade – Worcester Fire Department purchase of new fire truck. CDBG funded economic development activities will be used for façade improvement and microloan programs that support small business growth and aesthetic improvements to key corridors in distressed areas, retain existing jobs, and create new jobs.

Discussion

Overall the projected trend is a level funding of Federal Funds in the remaining two years of the five year Conplan in order to address identified priority needs. Depending on the program there is anywhere there is a couple of years timeframe to commit/expend funds. Larger projects could take a few years' worth of funding before a project would have those funds committed to it. In that instance if the funds weren't committed in year 3 they would be shown as Prior Year Resources in year 4. In addition to that funds which may have originally been committed to a project, but were subsequently not used would be reprogrammed and shown as Prior Year Resources.

Annual Goals and Objectives

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

Goals Summary Information

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
1	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts Green Island Revitalization Initiative	Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Rehabilitation of existing housing stock Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Assistance for first time homebuyers	CDBG: \$1,009,033 HOME: \$4,503,061	Rental units constructed: 11 Household Housing Unit Rental units rehabilitated: 38 Household Housing Unit Homeowner Housing Added: 3 Household Housing Unit Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 6 Household Housing Unit Direct Financial Assistance to Homebuyers: 20 Households Assisted Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing: 30 Households Assisted

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
2	Healthy and Sustainable Housing	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	Systematic housing inspections Housing contaminant and pest abatement Housing inspections and code enforcement Home energy efficiency improvements Weatherization of homes Environmental preservation Demolition of blighted properties	CDBG: \$290,301	Buildings Demolished: 2 Buildings Housing Code Enforcement/Foreclosed Property Care: 847 Household Housing Unit

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
3	Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Assistance for first time homebuyers Housing contaminant and pest abatement Housing inspections and code enforcement Demolition of blighted properties Elimination of area and spot blight Infill development 	CDBG: \$0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 2059 Persons Assisted

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
4	Economic Development & Business Assistance	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	Small business assistance Job and employment opportunities Attraction and retention of new businesses Job and skills training Recreational and community facilities Economic development loans and capital Small business and storefront improvements Technical assistance to small businesses	CDBG: \$15,000	Facade treatment/business building rehabilitation: 5 Business Jobs created/retained: 18 Jobs Businesses assisted: 5 Businesses Assisted
5	Public Services for Low-Moderate Income Persons	2020	2024	Non-Homeless Special Needs Non-Housing Community Development	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	Youth educational and recreational programs Information and referral to public services Health services (COVID-19 Inclusive) Food access and security Information and services for new immigrants Transportation and access to public services Case management services	CDBG: \$611,586	Public service activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 5445 Persons Assisted

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
6	Improvements and Preservation of Public Facilities	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	New streets and sidewalks Improvement of existing public infrastructure Improving public facilities for public services Energy improvements for public facilities Accessibility improvements for public facilities	CDBG: \$2,226,321	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 13817 Persons Assisted
7	Expanded Resources for Homeless Prevention	2020	2024	Homeless	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	Information and referral to public services Housing security and eviction prevention Services for disabled or special needs population Mental health and substance abuse services Access to public housing Case management services Discharge planning Housing search and advocacy Housing stabilization funds	ESG: \$265,996	Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing: 76 Households Assisted Homeless Person Overnight Shelter: 980 Persons Assisted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,369 referrals made

Sort Order	Goal Name	Start Year	End Year	Category	Geographic Area	Needs Addressed	Funding	Goal Outcome Indicator
8	Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons	2020	2024	Homeless	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	Information and referral to public services Services for disabled or special needs population Mental health and substance abuse services Access to public housing Case management services Coordinated entry system Discharge planning Housing search and advocacy Rapid re-housing rental assistance Housing stabilization funds	ESG: \$265,996	Homelessness Prevention: 189 Persons Assisted Other: 412 1,369 referrals made
9	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS	2020	2024	Homeless Non-Homeless Special Needs	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	Housing security and eviction prevention Transportation and access to public services Case management services Housing search and advocacy Rapid re-housing rental assistance	HOPWA: \$996,795	Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing: 39 Households Assisted Homelessness Prevention: 170 Persons Assisted Housing for People with HIV/AIDS added: 14 Household Housing Unit HIV/AIDS Housing Operations: 122 Household Housing Unit

Table 1 – Goals Summary

Goal Descriptions

1	Goal Name	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation
	Goal Description	The affordable housing development & preservation goal includes the development of new and mixed-use affordable housing, rehabilitation of existing housing stock, maintenance & repair services, and assistance to first time homebuyers.
2	Goal Name	Healthy and Sustainable Housing
	Goal Description	The healthy and sustainable housing goal includes environmental preservation, weatherization & energy efficiency improvements, housing inspections & code enforcements, systematic housing inspections, and contaminant and pest abatement.
3	Goal Name	Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization
	Goal Description	The neighborhood stabilization & revitalization goal includes the development of new affordable housing, development of new mixed-income housing, rehabilitation of existing housing stock, housing maintenance services, housing repair services, assistance for first-time homebuyers, systematic housing inspections, housing contaminant and pest abatement, housing inspections and code enforcement, demolition of blighted properties, elimination of area and spot blight, infill development, new streets and sidewalks, improvement of existing public infrastructure, small business assistance, small business and storefront improvements, revitalization of neighborhoods, and neighborhood public safety improvements.
4	Goal Name	Economic Development & Business Assistance
	Goal Description	The economic development & business assistance goal includes small business assistance, job and employment opportunities, attraction and retention of new businesses, job and skills training, recreational and community facilities, economic development loans, and capital, small businesses and storefront improvements, and technical assistance to small businesses.

5	Goal Name	Public Services for Low-Moderate Income Persons
	Goal Description	The public services for low-moderate income persons goal includes housing maintenance services, environmental preservation, youth educational and recreational programs, neighborhood public safety improvements, information and referral to public services, health services, youth employment opportunities, food access and security, housing security and eviction prevention, senior and elderly services, services for disabled or special needs population, information and services for new immigrants, transportation and access to public services, and substance abuse services.
6	Goal Name	Improvements and Preservation of Public Facilities
	Goal Description	The improvements and preservation of public facilities goal includes new streets and sidewalks, improvement of existing public infrastructure, improving public facilities for public services, improving public facilities serving public safety, energy improvements for public facilities, and accessibility improvements for public facilities.
7	Goal Name	Expanded Resources for Homeless Prevention
	Goal Description	To ensure resources are in place and available for low-income individuals and families in jeopardy of homelessness. These resources are especially in need for the extremely low income individuals and families of those being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (Health Care Facilities, Mental Health Facilities, Foster Care and other Youth Facilities, correction programs and Institutions). Resources for those receiving public or private assistance from agencies that address, housing, health, social services, employment, education or youth needs.
8	Goal Name	Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons
	Goal Description	The goal to help homeless people, especially the chronically homeless (individuals and families with and without children, Veterans and their families as well as unaccompanied Youth) make the transition to Permanent Housing and Independent living. The overall goal is to shorten the time experienced in homelessness and facilitating the access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units. Work collaboratively with communities on how to address equity as part of their program designs, in addition to the development of tools and resources for communities to improve their systems to increase equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), Women, and LGBTQ+.

9	Goal Name	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS
	Goal Description	Recognizing that stable housing plays a critical role in ensuring that individuals living with HIV/AIDS live healthy and productive lives. Having community-based organizations that offer housing resources to PLWHA, including STRMU (short-term rent, mortgage and utility assistance payments) as well as rental assistance and supportive services. This goal and services ensure that housing assistance and supportive services are available to low-income people living with HIV/AIDS in Worcester County and Northeastern Connecticut in order to avoid homelessness or obtain stable housing.

Projects

AP-35 Projects – 91.220(d)

Introduction

The City of Worcester is creating 17 projects to address the goals identified in Year 4 (7/1/22 - 6/30/23) of the Action Plan. These 17 projects will address the relevant goals that they are meeting and identify the sources of funds to be used.

Projects

#	Project Name
1	PUBLIC SERVICES
2	NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT FUND
3	PUBLIC FACILITIES FUND
4	AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS
5	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
6	CODE ENFORCEMENT
7	DEBT SERVICE
8	HOPWA23 AIDS PROJECT WORCESTER
9	HOPWA23 COMMUNITY HEALTHLINK
10	HOPWA23 MONTACHUSETT OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL
11	HOPWA23 ADVANCING CONNECTICUT TOGETHER
12	HOPWA23 GRANTEE ADMIN
13	HESG23 - WORCESTER
14	CDBG PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION
15	HOME ADMIN
16	TBRA (TENANT BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE)
17	GREEN ISLAND

Table 7 - Project Information

Describe the reasons for allocation priorities and any obstacles to addressing underserved needs

Challenges to meeting underserved needs in the coming year stem primarily from increasing demand for program activities combined with decreasing amounts of funding. In order to maximize efficiency and achieve a greater impact, the City proposes the following actions:

Annually, EOED conducts funding overview and technical assistance workshops for parties interested in applying for HUD entitlement funds through CDBG, HOPWA, and ESG, (usually planned for November). The workshops are designed to focus and facilitate discussion with interested parties in

Order to define the key social service issues and community needs in Worcester. To identify gaps in service and brainstorm potential strategies to address needs and gaps. The workshops were also designed to foster dialogue among agencies and departments to enhance collaboration and the sharing of information.

Continue to work to improve access of services to those with limited English proficiency to reach the underserved populations. According to the most recent US Census American Community Survey Data, 18 percent of the Worcester populations speaks a language other than English and speaks English less than “very well”. The continued importance of ensuring that critical programs and services address language and cultural barriers that isolate households and impede successful utilization of community resources. A Language Assistance Plan was established for HUD Entitlement Programs.

Allocation priorities for the 4th Year Action Plan incorporate updated analysis and research continues to indicate the need for investment efforts around addressing affordable housing production and barriers to accessing affordable housing, along with trends related to aging housing stock and deferred maintenance, along with Rapid-Rehousing or Continuum of Care (CoC) supported projects.

Consultation with service providers stresses a continued need for social and human service, housing supportive services for low to moderate income and special needs populations including our youth, recent immigrants, resettled refugees. This also encompasses the elderly, homeless and individuals with substance abuse and mental health challenges, as well as those living with HIV/AIDS.

Collaboration with Ascentria Care Alliance to provide language banks services for more than 90 different languages continues. This has significantly improved access to City services for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The contracts with Ascentria provides interpreters to be available either onsite or by telephone for City employees interacting with the public – including at City Hall and onsite during situations like code inspections and public safety situations. This policy is part of a larger effort by the City Manager and numerous City Departments to make municipal government more inclusive, diverse, and reflective of the community it serves.

The language policy will ensure meaningful communication between LEP persons and the City by providing for interpretation and translation services at no cost to the LEP person being served. Communication services, provided for information contained in private documents, including applications, statements, ordinances, and relevant forms. Written translation for vital documents, including consent and complaint forms, applications for programs, activities or to receive City government benefits or services, etc., are also provided.

AP-38 Project Summary

1	Project Name	PUBLIC SERVICES
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Public Services for Low-Moderate Income Persons
	Needs Addressed	Information and referral to public services Health services (COVID-19 Inclusive) Youth employment opportunities Food access and security Information and services for new immigrants Transportation and access to public services Case management services
	Funding	CDBG: \$611,586
	Description	Public Services activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is projected that 5,445 persons will be served by public service activities during the fourth year action plan (7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024). It is estimated that 68% (or approx. 3,703) will be persons from families/households, with the remaining 32% (or approx. 1,742) being single persons. Among persons to served it is estimated that 85% (approx. 4,629) will be of extremely low income (0-30% Median Household Income), 11% (approx. 599) will be of very low income (31-50% Median Household Income), and 3% (approx. 163) will be of low income (51-80% Median Household Income).

	Location Description	<p>Service site addresses (all City of Worcester, MA): AFRICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION (ACE), 61 Gage St., 01605; CENTRO LAS AMERICAS, 11 Sycamore St., 01608 and 174 Tacoma St. 01605; COMMUNITY BUILDERS VITA site: 16 Laurel St., 01608, 10 Chestnut St., 875 Main St. 01610, 486 Chandler St. 01602; DISMAS HOUSE, 30 Richards St., 01603; FAMILY HEALTH CENTER OF WORCESTER, 26 Queen St., 01610; FRIENDLY HOUSE, 36 Wall St., 01604 and 16 Laurel St., 01608; QUINSIGAMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CENTER, 16 Greenwood St., 01607; RACHEL'S TABLE, 1050 Main St., 01603; SOUTHEAST ASIAN COALITION OF CENTRAL MA, 50 Portland St., 01608; SOUTH WORCESTER NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER, 47 Camp St., 01603 and 50 Canton St., 01610; UNITED WAY YOUTHCONNECT SUMMER Sites: Boys & Girls Club, 65 Boys & Girls Club Wy, 01610, Friendly House, 36 Wall St., 01604, Girls, Inc., 125 Providence St., 01604, HOPE Coalition, 16 Shaffner St., 01605, United Way, 18 Chestnut St., 01608, Worcester Youth Center, 326 Chandler St., 01602, YMCA, 766 Main St., 01610, YWCA, 1 Salem Sq., 01608.</p>
	Planned Activities	<p>AFRICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION (ACE) - After School Program; CENTRO LAS AMERICAS - Case Management, Emergency Food Pantry – 2 sites; COMMUNITY BUILDERS - Volunteer Income Tax Preparation Assistance – 4 sites; DISMAS HOUSE – Basic Advocacy for Reentry; FAMILY HEALTH CENTER OF WORCESTER - Emergency Dental Services, Healthcare for Homeless Families; FRIENDLY HOUSE - Case Management, Youth Development Services; QUINSIGAMOND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CENTER – Basic Needs Services; RACHEL'S TABLE - Children's Milk Fund; SOUTHEAST ASIAN COALITION OF CENTRAL MA – Case Management; SOUTH WORCESTER NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER – Case Management; UNITED WAY YOUTHCONNECT SUMMER – Youth Summer Recreation – 8 sites.</p>
2	Project Name	NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT FUND
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization

Needs Addressed	Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Rehabilitation of existing housing stock Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Assistance for first time homebuyers Systematic housing inspections Housing contaminant and pest abatement Elimination of area and spot blight Infill development New streets and sidewalks Small business assistance Recreational and community facilities Economic development loans and capital Revitalization of neighborhoods Neighborhood public safety improvements
Funding	CDBG: \$0
Description	Public Facilities Improvements other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit.
Target Date	6/30/2024
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The population of the Green Island Target Area (Census Tract 7325.00) was 2,490 persons (2020 US Census American Community Survey), of which 2,465 persons (99%) lived in households, of which 1,619 (65%) were in family households (two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption). Low and Moderate Income Population comprised 82.7% (the 5th highest percent among the city's 44 census tracts. 33.9% of persons were in poverty (compared to 22.1% citywide).

	Location Description	The Green Island Neighborhood target area corresponds to U.S. Census Tract 7325.00. Located just south of the city's downtown, it is a 0.31 square mile, triangular shaped tract bordered on the east by I-290, the southwest by Providence and Worcester Railroad, and the northwest by CSX railroad. The neighborhood is an urbanized, older, predominantly low income inner city neighborhood of mixed uses – housing (mostly 1-3 family wood frame), industrial and warehouses, small commercial stores and bars. Mostly developed 1860s – 1920s along the former Blackstone Canal (which runs underneath Harding St.).
	Planned Activities	CDBG funds will be targeted to the revitalization of the Green Island Neighborhood in tandem with the construction of the new minor league baseball stadium and mixed-use development in the area. Similar to recent efforts in the Union Hill neighborhood, the city plans to use a multi-departmental approach to work with residents and stakeholders to develop a revitalization plan which will redevelop homes (exteriors and internal core systems), businesses, streets, sidewalks, trees, and other improvements and seek to preserve neighborhood affordability.
3	Project Name	PUBLIC FACILITIES FUND
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Improvements and Preservation of Public Facilities
	Needs Addressed	New streets and sidewalks Improvement of existing public infrastructure Improving public facilities for public services Improving public facilities serving public safety Energy improvements for public facilities Accessibility improvements for public facilities Mental health and substance abuse services
	Funding	CDBG: \$1,700,987
	Description	Public Facilities Improvements other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit.
	Target Date	6/30/2024

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Beneficiaries to be served through 3 public facilities improvement projects to be funded through CDBG during the Fourth Year Action plan: AFRICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION (Gym Renovation) – annually serves 1,817 youth served from low- and moderate-income households; BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB (Flooring Rehab) – annually serves 8,000 low- and mod income persons; FRIENDLY HOUSE (Core Facility ADA Accessibility Project – annually serves 4,000 low- and moderate income persons.
	Location Description	City of Worcester locations of the 3 public facilities improvement projects to be funded through CDBG during the Fourth Year Action plan are: AFRICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION – Gym Renovation, 61 Gage St., 01605 (Census Tract 7318.00); BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB – Flooring Rehab, 65 Boys and Girls Club Way, 01610 (Census Tract 7313.00), FRIENDLY HOUSE – ADA Accessibility Project, 36 Wall St., 01604 (Census Tract 7322.03).
	Planned Activities	Planned activities to be funded through 3 public facilities improvement projects under CDBG during the Fourth Year Action plan are: AFRICAN COMMUNITY EDUCATION – Gym Renovation; BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB – Flooring Rehab, FRIENDLY HOUSE – Core Facility ADA Accessibility Project.
4	Project Name	AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts Green Island Revitalization Initiative
	Goals Supported	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation
	Needs Addressed	Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Rehabilitation of existing housing stock Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Assistance for first time homebuyers Infill development
	Funding	CDBG: \$490,000.00 HOME: \$3,600,151.00

	Description	Affordable Housing Programs have the objective of creating decent affordable housing for Low-Moderate Families and individuals.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that at least 78 Low-Moderate income families will benefit from the activities being proposed.
	Location Description	Locations where most activities will take place will be in the Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts in the City.
	Planned Activities	The Affordable Housing Programs include the development of new and mixed use affordable housing, rehabilitation of existing housing stock, maintenance & repair services, and assistance to first time homebuyers. CHDO set aside of (\$272,673.15 or 15%) of the FY2023 HOME fund grant of \$1,817,821.00
5	Project Name	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Economic Development & Business Assistance
	Needs Addressed	Small business assistance Job and employment opportunities Attraction and retention of new businesses Job and skills training Recreational and community facilities Economic development loans and capital Small business and storefront improvements Technical assistance to small businesses
	Funding	CDBG: \$10,000
	Description	Economic Development and Business Assistance.
	Target Date	6/30/2024

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 5 businesses will be assisted, 18 jobs created or retained, and 5 businesses will receive Façade treatment/business rehabilitation
	Location Description	City of Worcester
	Planned Activities	It is estimated that 5 businesses will be assisted, 9 jobs created or retained, and 5 businesses will receive Façade treatment/business rehabilitation
6	Project Name	CODE ENFORCEMENT
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Healthy and Sustainable Housing
	Needs Addressed	Systematic housing inspections Housing contaminant and pest abatement Housing inspections and code enforcement Home energy efficiency improvements Weatherization of homes Environmental preservation
	Funding	CDBG: \$222,000
	Description	The Systematic Housing Inspections Program is expected to arrest neighborhood decline and deterioration by proactively identifying and inspecting for code violations in neighborhoods and by undertaking activities to demolish hazardous buildings in order to stabilize immediate area, and to eliminate specific conditions of blight or physical decay on a spot basis throughout the City of Worcester.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	It is estimated that 847 units of housing will be inspected benefitting up to that amount of families with the proposed activity. At least 3 families in the surrounding areas to the project's sites will benefit from this activity.

	Location Description	The Systematic Housing Inspections Program will take place will be in a Low-Moderate areas of the City. Previous locations included Union Hill and Main South areas. Demolition activities can occur throughout the City.
	Planned Activities	847 units of housing will be inspected and 3 buildings will be demolished.
7	Project Name	DEBT SERVICE
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation
	Needs Addressed	Development of new affordable housing
	Funding	CDBG: \$287,220
	Description	Repayment of part of debt service for 108 loan.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	
	Location Description	City of Worcester
	Planned Activities	Repayment of part of debt service for HUD Section 108 Loan granted for Gardner-Kilby-Hammond (GKH) Initiative.
8	Project Name	HOPWA23 AIDS PROJECT WORCESTER
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS

	Needs Addressed	Housing security and eviction prevention Transportation and access to public services Case management services Housing search and advocacy Rapid re-housing rental assistance Housing stabilization funds
	Funding	HOPWA: \$609,142
	Description	AIDS Project Worcester uses HOPWA funds to continue its Housing Services Program for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Central MA, through homelessness prevention and rental start up assistance.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	90 households with at least one member living with HIV/AIDS
	Location Description	City of Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA)
	Planned Activities	The program consists of four components: 1) Short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance (STRMU); 2) Permanent Housing Placement, providing payments for the first and last months' rent for eligible clients; 3) Tenant-Based Rental Assistance and 4) Housing Case Management.
9	Project Name	HOPWA23 COMMUNITY HEALTHLINK
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS
	Needs Addressed	Transportation and access to public services Mental health and substance abuse services Case management services Housing search and advocacy
	Funding	HOPWA: \$0

	Description	Description Community Healthlink, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides housing supportive services to people living with HIV/AIDS.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	8 households with at least one family member living with HIV/AIDS will receive supportive services.
	Location Description	City of Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA)
	Planned Activities	Housing Supportive Services within Permanent Supportive Housing programs assist tenants in maintaining permanent housing; maintaining their use of community resources and benefits; and achieve short term goals towards self-sufficiency.
10	Project Name	HOPWA23 MAKING OPPORTUNITY COUNT
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS
	Needs Addressed	Housing security and eviction prevention Transportation and access to public services Case management services Housing search and advocacy Rapid re-housing rental assistance
	Funding	HOPWA: \$265,833
	Description	Making Opportunity Count operates a permanent housing program serving chronically homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their family members in North Worcester County.
	Target Date	6/30/2024

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	12 chronically homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their family members will receive rental assistance.
	Location Description	City of Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA).
	Planned Activities	Funding for Rental Assistance and Supportive Services for the Housing First Supportive Housing program, a scattered site 7-unit permanent housing program in North Worcester County.
11	Project Name	HOPWA23 ADVANCING CONNECTICUT TOGETHER
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS
	Needs Addressed	Transportation and access to public services Case management services Housing search and advocacy Housing stabilization funds
	Funding	HOPWA: \$97,827
	Description	Funding for Supportive Services and Permanent Housing Placement, providing payments for the first and last months rent for eligible clients.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	11 chronically homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS and their family members will receive rental assistance. 30 households with at least one family member living with HIV/AIDS will receive supportive services.
	Location Description	Located in Willimantic, Connecticut within the City of Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA).
	Planned Activities	
12	Project Name	HOPWA23 GRANTEE ADMIN

	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS
	Needs Addressed	Housing security and eviction prevention Transportation and access to public services Case management services Housing search and advocacy Rapid re-housing rental assistance
	Funding	HOPWA: \$23,993
	Description	HOPWA Grantee Admin
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The total households expected to benefit from HOPWA services under the Year 2 Action Plan is 108 households.
	Location Description	City of Worcester Eligible Metropolitan Statistical Area (EMSA).
	Planned Activities	Financial Management and Program Oversight of HOPWA activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing Supportive Services •Tenant-Based Rental Assistance •Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance •Permanent Housing Placement •Housing Facility Operations
13	Project Name	HESG23 - WORCESTER
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Expanded Resources for Homeless Prevention Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons

	Needs Addressed	Information and referral to public services Housing security and eviction prevention Services for disabled or special needs population Mental health and substance abuse services Access to public housing Case management services Coordinated entry system Discharge planning Housing search and advocacy Rapid re-housing rental assistance Housing stabilization funds
	Funding	ESG: \$531,992
	Description	Emergency Solutions Grant Program supports City-wide strategies to address the housing needs of homeless and at-risk households in the City of Worcester.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	Approximately 716 homeless and at-risk households (individuals and families).
	Location Description	City of Worcester
	Planned Activities	FY2023 \$371,989+ Prior Year Resources \$160,003= \$881,149 Street Outreach \$57,058.17 Emergency Shelter \$119,141.60 Rapid Re-Housing/ Homelessness Prevention \$154,750 Utilities, Transportation, and Food \$11,500.00 HMIS \$15,000 Admin \$26,039.23 (7.5% of \$371,989.00)
14	Project Name	CDBG PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION

	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation Healthy and Sustainable Housing Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization Economic Development & Business Assistance Public Services for Low-Moderate Income Persons Improvements and Preservation of Public Facilities

<p>Needs Addressed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Rehabilitation of existing housing stock Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Assistance for first time homebuyers Systematic housing inspections Housing contaminant and pest abatement Housing inspections and code enforcement Home energy efficiency improvements Weatherization of homes Environmental preservation Demolition of blighted properties Elimination of area and spot blight Infill development New streets and sidewalks Improvement of existing public infrastructure Small business assistance Job and employment opportunities Attraction and retention of new businesses Job and skills training Recreational and community facilities Economic development loans and capital Small business and storefront improvements Technical assistance to small businesses Improving public facilities for public services Revitalization of neighborhoods Improving public facilities serving public safety Energy improvements for public facilities Accessibility improvements for public facilities
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		Youth educational and recreational programs Neighborhood public safety improvements Information and referral to public services Health services (COVID-19 Inclusive) Youth employment opportunities Food access and security Housing security and eviction prevention Senior and elderly services Services for disabled or special needs population Information and services for new immigrants Transportation and access to public services
	Funding	CDBG: \$830,448
	Description	CDBG Planning and Admin up to 20% of total Entitlement Grant.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	
	Location Description	
	Planned Activities	
15	Project Name	HOME ADMIN
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation

	Needs Addressed	Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Rehabilitation of existing housing stock Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Infill development
	Funding	HOME: \$732,910
	Description	FY 2022 HOME Admin funding for salaries & fringe and indirect expenses.
	Target Date	6/30/2024
	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	
	Location Description	
	Planned Activities	
16	Project Name	TBRA (TENANT BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE)
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts
	Goals Supported	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation
	Needs Addressed	Housing stabilization funds
	Funding	HOME: \$170,000
	Description	HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program.
	Target Date	6/30/2024

	Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	At least 30 homeless households.
	Location Description	City of Worcester
	Planned Activities	Rental Assistance of up to 24 months for each household.
17	Project Name	GREEN ISLAND
	Target Area	Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts Green Island Revitalization Initiative
	Goals Supported	Affordable Housing Development & Preservation Neighborhood Stabilization & Revitalization

<p>Needs Addressed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new affordable housing Development of new mixed-income housing Rehabilitation of existing housing stock Housing maintenance services Housing repair services Assistance for first time homebuyers Systematic housing inspections Housing contaminant and pest abatement Elimination of area and spot blight Infill development New streets and sidewalks Small business assistance Recreational and community facilities Economic development loans and capital Small business and storefront improvements Technical assistance to small businesses Improving public facilities for public services Revitalization of neighborhoods Improving public facilities serving public safety
<p>Funding</p>	<p>CDBG: \$0</p>

Description	In 2021, the City is expected to continue the Green Island Neighborhood Initiative. The approach to this new neighborhood focused initiative will be modelled in part after the impactful multi-departmental effort at revitalizing and improving the Union Hill neighborhood (2013 - 2019) through strategically placed and focused housing, infrastructure, and public safety improvements. The City anticipates the project to have the added emphasis of preservation of affordable housing as the neighborhood is proximate to the multi-million dollar development of a new minor league baseball stadium to be affiliated with the Boston Red Sox and anticipated to be operational by 2021. The stadium development, and associated anticipated market changes, may impact Green Island neighborhood residents, including potential market changes related to increased housing prices. The City conducted extensive public outreach and participation efforts to help define the existing and anticipated needs of the neighborhood residents and stakeholders in the summer of 2019, with an anticipated five year dedication of involvement to helping improve and stabilize the predominantly low-to moderate income neighborhood through the use of federal, non-profit, and private funds.
Target Date	6/30/2024
Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities	The population of the Green Island Target Area (Census Tract 7325.00) was 1,953 persons.
Location Description	Map provided with Action Plan.
Planned Activities	The initiative will therefore have the added emphasis of helping existing homeowners stay in and maintain their homes, as well as keep rent increases controlled through affordability restrictions placed on any housing improvements made with HUD originated funds. Public facility/Neighborhood Development funds could also be used in area as well.

AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.220(f)

Description of the geographic areas of the entitlement (including areas of low-income and minority concentration) where assistance will be directed

The City of Worcester is comprised of 44 U.S. Census tracts, of which 26 tracts had 51.0% or more of their populations being persons of Low-Moderate Income (LMI) - defined by HUD as households whose incomes were 80% or less of the metropolitan area median income as adjusted for family size. These 26 LMI tracts are: 7304.01, 7304.02; 7305.00; 7310.02; 7311.01, 7311.02, 7312.03, 7312.04, 7313.00, 7314.00, 7315.00, 7316.00, 7317.00, 7318.00, 7319.00, 7320.01, 7322.01, 7322.02; 7322.03, 7323.02, 7324.00, 7325.00, 7326.00, 7327.00, 7329.02, and 7330.00. (see attached Low Income Population City of Worcester Map for locations). An examination of the attached Demographic Analysis of Target Areas Tables show that these 26 LMI tracts has a greater proportion of the city's racial and ethnic minority populations. According to the latest U.S. Census estimates (from 2020), the citywide percentages by racial and ethnic populations were: 48.9% White, non-Hispanic, 24.6% Hispanic, 13.7% Black/African American, non-Hispanic, 7.1% Asian, non-Hispanic, 4.2% multi-race, non-Hispanic, 1.5% all other single races. In comparison within these 26 tracts with majority Low-Moderate Income populations, the latest U.S. Census estimates (from 2020) reported the following percentages by racial and ethnic populations: 38.3% White, non-Hispanic, 33.1% Hispanic, 14.9% Black/African American, non-Hispanic, 7.8% Asian, non-Hispanic, 4.4% multi-race, non-Hispanic, 1.5% all other single races.

One of these tracts, 7325.00, was ranked as one of the top 5 of the city's most distressed and the with high levels of poverty, crime, problems with idle youth including gangs and drugs, foreclosed properties, absentee property ownership, vacant/boarded-up buildings, empty lots and other economic distress factors. This tract (7325.00) is the focus of the Green Island neighborhood, which will work across multiple City departments in concert with key community institutions and stakeholders to improve the quality of life in that area.

The city's focus on targeted, strategic neighborhood development and revitalization is exemplified by the targeting of allocations to programs that serve Low-Moderate Income census tracts particularly in the Green Island neighborhood. Overall 96% non-administrative, Fourth Year Annual Action Plan (7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024) funds are targeted to activities located or that serve the above reported 26 LMI Census Tracts, of which 6% of allocated funds will directly serve the Green Island neighborhood.

Geographic Distribution

Target Area	Percentage of Funds
Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts	90
Green Island Revitalization Initiative	6

Table 8 - Geographic Distribution

Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically

Beginning in the summer of 2019, the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) engaged in a citizen participation process to identify community needs and provide community input on activities and programs to fund. Ten community needs assessment public meetings were held in different parts of the City, with at least one in each of the City Council districts. The meetings were attended by 141 total participants from neighborhoods with underserved, low-income, diverse, and minority residents. All meetings were intentionally held at locations accessible for potential and actual beneficiaries. The public meetings were advertised broadly through the City's media office as well as through door-to-door neighborhood outreach with at least one bilingual staff member. At each of the meetings, two bilingual staff persons were present that were able to provide translation and/or facilitation in Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition, a special public hearing was also held in the Green Island neighborhood in July 2019 to focus attention on the needs of that, very low- income, inner-city neighborhood (65 persons participated).

The Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan informed the four year (2023-2024) annual action plan outreach/funding recommendation process. The Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) traditionally serves as the formal citizen body that provides input on funding applications submitted as part of the city's CDBG Request For Proposal (RFP) process. The CDAC is a citizen advisory committee comprised of ten members, with two from each of Worcester's five council districts. This year, the CDAC met remotely six times in February – April 2023 to evaluate, review and rate CDBG proposals for Public Services, Public Facilities and Improvements, and City Interdepartmental applicants that submitted proposals in response to this year's RFP, which was issued on December 1, 2022 and due by January 10, 2023.

While the CDAC issues initial advisory recommendations on funding allocations, it is the city administration, through the city manager, that ultimately recommends which CDBG projects and activities to fund which form the basis of the annual action plan.

HOPWA proposals were vetted by the city administration together with the HOPWA Advisory Committee. This committee is composed of experts in community health and the HIV/AIDS field in Worcester County and Connecticut. The process was similar to CDAC in its review, including holding a remote public meeting to introduce the HOPWA process and guidelines, and to review and rate HOPWA proposals.

ESG proposals were vetted by an ESG RFP Review Committee that was comprised of members of the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care (CoC), and local funders of such social services such as the United Way. The ESG RFP Review Committee also followed a similar process to the CDAC in its review, including holding a remote public meeting to introduce the ESG process and guidelines, and to

review and rate ESG proposals.

Discussion

As discussed above, 87% non-administrative, Fourth Year Annual Action Plan (7/1/2023 – 6/30/2024) funds are targeted to activities located or that serve the above reported 26 LMI Census Tracts, of which 10% will directly serve the Green Island Target Area.

In an effort to address public facilities goals contained in the 2020-2025 Consolidated Plan \$1,991,710 in CDBG funds have been allocated in the Fourth Year Action Plan to improve streets, sidewalks, and other forms of eligible public infrastructure within eligible low and moderate income neighborhoods (in tandem with improvements made by other city departments, public and private partners).

All CDBG funded public service activities operate out of facilities that are located within and have the vast majority of the clients that they serve come from the Low-Moderate Income Census Tracts. Beneficiaries to be served through three public facilities improvement projects to be funded through CDBG during the Fourth Year Action plan are the African Community Education Center – Gym Renovation for \$195,000 (added to \$180,240 funded last year), Boys and Girls Club – Flooring Rehab for \$86,754, and Friendly House – Core Facility ADA Accessibility Project for \$89,522.

CDBG funded economic development activities will continue to be used for façade improvement and programs that support small business growth and aesthetic improvements to key corridors in distressed areas, retain existing jobs, and create new jobs.

Affordable Housing

AP-55 Affordable Housing – 91.220(g) Introduction

The City of Worcester will directly support households with rental assistance, production of new units, rehabilitation of existing units, and acquisition of existing units through the following goals:

- Goal 1 Affordable Housing Development & Preservation,
- Goal 7 Expanded Resources for Homeless Prevention
- Goal 8 Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons, and
- Goal 9 Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS.

Below is the summary breakdown of the support provided from the above goals.

One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported	
Homeless	87
Non-Homeless	95
Special-Needs	34
Total	216

Table 9 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement

One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through	
Rental Assistance	140
The Production of New Units	11
Rehab of Existing Units	45
Acquisition of Existing Units	20
Total	216

Table 10 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type

Discussion

While nearly 500 homeless individuals will be prevented from homelessness with ESG/HOPWA funds between Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing, the above number includes only those who will be supported by a direct rental assistance subsidy through ESG or HOPWA’s STRMU/PHP and TBRA projects.

AP-60 Public Housing – 91.220(h)

Introduction

The Worcester Housing Authority's (WHA) mission is to enhance the Worcester community by creating and sustaining decent, safe, and affordable housing that champions stability and self-sufficiency for our residents.

WHA is an autonomous corporation which is allowed to act as a municipal entity and participate in municipal benefits.

The City's Executive Office of Economic Development's Housing Development Division and the WHA operate independently, and therefore the Housing Development Division's direct role in providing public housing is limited.

Actions planned during the next year to address the needs to public housing

Clearly the most difficult issue facing low income households in Worcester is the availability of affordable housing options currently almost 60% of mobile voucher holders are requesting extensions to identify an eligible unit. Additionally, almost 30% of vouchers issued are being returned (after exhausting all extensions) due to the lack of affordable apartments. This is a slight decrease from previous year that was around 31%. The COVID pandemic and the extensions offered by HUD may be misleading the current numbers as typically participants have 6 months to find an apartment. Currently, we have numerous families that have been searching for an apartment for over 18 months. When those vouchers expire, the percentage of returned vouchers will increase dramatically.

The WHA's strategy with regard to its public housing inventory is to:

- Continue to maintain a 98% or higher monthly occupancy rate agency wide;
- Explore and implement solutions to modernize / redevelop current portfolio, while increasing affordable unit.
- Decrease unit turnover time in an effort to house families more efficiently;
- Monitor the opening and closing of its waiting lists to ensure that applicants' wait time is reduced to as short as possible;
- Increase the number of private landlords who participate in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program;
- Continue its rigorous screening of applicants to ensure that landlords are renting to qualified candidates, increasing the desirability of the Housing Choice Voucher program;
- Apply for additional HCV should they become available.

Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership

In 2015, the Worcester Housing Authority developed a program to help residents become self-sufficient, called "A Better Life" (ABL). This program offers interested applicants a faster means to secure an apartment for their family compared to the standard waiting time for a public housing apartment. In

return, the applicant agrees to do those things necessary to provide their family with a better life. WHA will work with them every step of the way. The program is mandatory for state public housing residents but voluntary for federal housing residents.

The ABL program continues to have a tremendous impact with the residents participating in this program. Participants continue to make significant improvements with their education, employment and finances.

Minimal Evictions - Since the work/school requirement was implemented (2015), only two families have lost their housing assistance due to this requirement. The program services a few hundred families per year. The last time an eviction occurred due to non-compliance of ABL program was before the pandemic in early 2019.

Substantial increase in number of residents employed - Of the 250 clients, only 31% were employed when they enrolled in ABL. Currently, 70% are employed. An increase of over 126%. Of the clients that have been enrolled for 24 months, 72% are now employed. That's an increase of over 132%.

Increase in annual earnings - Clients have seen an overall increase of 71% with their gross annual income. Additionally, clients enrolled for 24 months, have collectively more than doubled their annual earnings since when they enrolled in ABL.

Completion of educational programs - Active and former ABL clients have completed an astounding 181 educational programs including 80 Certifications, 17 Associate Degrees and 5 Bachelor Degrees.

Decrease in personal debt - Overall, debt has been reduced by 31% among all clients. Clients that have graduated the program significantly reduced their debt by 71%.

The WHA also developed the employment readiness program with the goal of partnering with local employers willing and committed to hiring prescreened/pre-qualified candidates that are enrolled in the ABL program. ABL is an intensive program for clients with access to resources aimed to promote self-sufficiency.

In just over 2 years, over 90 private sector employers committed to hiring our ABL candidates. Focusing on industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, retail, and hospitality, over 132 candidates have been hired through our employer partners. ABL has expanded its partnerships by implementing on-site on the job training program exposure for candidates. With a retention rate of over 74%, the ABL employment readiness programs are proof that our candidates have the skills, qualifications and motivation to succeed in the workforce.

The WHA has long realized that a portion of its success is dependent upon the satisfaction of its residents. Continuing on a long standing tradition of fostering partnerships, building resident leadership opportunities, WHA supports 15 formally recognized tenant organizations and they are the conduit through which ideas and issues are presented to the WHA administration. In turn the administration facilitates through the organizations new policy, operational and program changes and enhancements to the residents.

If the PHA is designated as troubled, describe the manner in which financial assistance will be provided or other assistance

n/a

Discussion

Additionally, a WHA Resident Advisory Board, known as the Jurisdiction-Wide Resident Council (JWRC) meets monthly with the WHA Chief Executive Officer to discuss, in addition to policy, operational and programming, other areas that have a direct effect on the people it serves.

AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities – 91.220(i)

Introduction

The City's plan to address homelessness continues to strive to expand on the successful "housing-first" model, which moves away from extensive and costly shelter stays to focus on homelessness prevention to stabilize individual adults, families, youth and young adults experiencing housing instability. The City's ultimate goal, to stabilize those in our community who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness so they can ultimately obtain safe and affordable permanent housing. The City recognizes the need to develop units for individuals and families through innovative strategies, including rehabilitation of existing housing stock, furthering homelessness prevention efforts, and improving the delivery of comprehensive service strategies that address the health, employment and long-term self-sufficiency skills targeted to specific populations struggling with homelessness and other special needs.

Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including

Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs

The success of the Cities current strategy of reaching out to shelter and unsheltered homeless people and assessing their individual needs proves the cities strategies are working. These actions are associated with the Action Plan Goal 8: Resolving Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons. City ESG funds support the salary and fringe for Outreach Case Managers to assess individual needs and enable access to mainstream resources and housing referrals for households without children that are unsheltered. In one year, it is expected that the Outreach Case Managers will engage with 240 or more literally homeless individuals and unsheltered couple of households. The Outreach Workers, are employees of multiple agencies within Worcester County, one being of the City of Worcester's Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), another being an employee of AIDS Project Worcester (APW) another from Living in Freedom Together (LIFT). All of these Case Managers/Outreach Workers work closely with the City of Worcester Quality of Life Task Force, the Crisis Intervention Team through the Worcester Police Department and other local outreach players in collaboration with the Worcester City and County Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System.

Homeless outreach services in the City that identify and engage with individuals/families that offer immediate and long-term assistance to unsheltered people by frequenting locations such as Union Station, the Public Library in the Downtown corridor, parks and roadways prone to pan handling and loitering and daily stops at soup kitchens and food pantries assist in reaching this population. The goal is to engage with people over time and through presence of outreach to build relationships, and connect those who typically refuse services to resources such as housing case management, substance abuse treatment and benefit assistance. As the City continues engaging and supporting through their Outreach Worker, it also has the support of South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC), which is the agency

that operates the Triage & Assessment Center. As well as (NOC) Net of Compassion, who has been running a 24/7 shelter on Vernon Street to allow individuals to have a “safe place” for not only themselves, but their belongings as well. Veterans Inc. has opened up a 12 bed shelter for women in Worcester and Living in Freedom Together has a new shelter in Worcester for women escaping sex trafficking. The additional staff helps to facilitate referrals and ultimately, permanent housing solutions. Community outreach organizations engage with partners and stakeholders to create holistic systems of outreach, engaging with hospitals, law enforcement, detox centers and other services that commonly encounter homeless individuals.

Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons

The City continues addressing the needs of both emergency shelters and transitional shelters for the homeless, which are encompassed in Strategic Plan Goal 8: Resolve Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons, and Goal 9: Housing Opportunities for People Living with HIV/AIDS. These programs will have continued support by both ESG and HOPWA funds. **Hotel Grace**, run by the Net of Compassions is a collaborative effort bringing outreach, counseling and assistance to homeless individuals in the streets of Worcester. Services, provided at Net of Compassions (HOTEL GRACE) are at one location on Vernon Street in the City. An interrelated programs run by Hotel Grace is Main Street Saturdays, and ongoing outreach and peer counseling. Hotel Grace is an emergency cold weather shelter with sixty (60) beds available on a first come basis each night that the weather dips below 32 degrees. The shelter has been running at a 24/7 capacity due to the COVID Pandemic, allowing a warm and safe place to sleep. They provide a warm meal, counseling, outreach and referrals services and volunteer legal services are also available. In the course of winter, Hotel Graces serves more than 600 individuals. Due to the success of the 24/7, shelter Hotel Grace opened up again October 1, 2021 one month earlier at the request of the City.

(ESG) Emergency Solutions Grant funds provide Emergency Shelter and Essential Services for unaccompanied homeless adults at the Triage & Assessment Center, Open Sky (formerly the Bridge of Central Mass) and Veterans Inc., through a veteran-specific emergency shelter project. During the COVID19 Pandemic, additional ESG funding, awarded to these agencies in order for them to provide essential services above the normal grant award. ESG Cares Act funding, awarded to Community Healthlink to establish public showers, Community Legal Aid to assist individuals/families with legal services in the court system so that they may remain housed if their housing were at risk and Living in Freedom Together (LIFT) to provide emergency shelter and case management services to those fleeing the sex trafficking industry. Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA) as well as Open Sky were awarded additional funding for an EHV System Navigator that tracks the progress of clients facing housing instability/homelessness. CMHA also began a Data Collection and Coordinated Entry Expansion programs with additional monies.

(HOPWA) Housing Opportunities for People with Aids funds provide supportive services that may assist individuals living with HIV/AIDS in connecting to emergency shelter and transitional housing through the

Coordinated Entry and Access Systems in both Worcester County and Windham County, CT. HOPWA funds awarded to AIDS Project Worcester (APW), Making Opportunity Count (MOC), Community Healthlink (CHL) and Advancing Connecticut Together, with supportive services such as finding housing, assisting with first, last month's rent, utilities, food and supplies. Perception Programs (PPI) notified the City during the 1st quarter that they would be unable to provide services as anticipated and withdrew allowing funding to be reprogrammed. Advancing Connecticut Together (ACT) sent the City a proposal in order that the population in Windham County would not suffer and was funded to assist individuals in that area.

All of these activities help address the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless populations because of the crisis-intervention nature of the program support. The programs recognize that permanent housing is the ultimate goal, with some populations, particularly at-risk may need enhanced stabilization and case management.

Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from becoming homeless again

The transition to permanent housing and independent living, ensuring that households do not return to homelessness are the priority needs identified in Goal 8: Resolving Barriers to Housing for Homeless Persons and Goal 9: Housing Opportunities for People Living with HIV/AIDS of the Strategic Plan. Assisting the homeless, whether they be individuals, families, single veterans or those with families and unaccompanied youth, is the area that is continually being addressed as a priority and allows the focus to continue on housing facility and the supportive service needs to transition to permanent housing. This accomplished with the expertise of sub-recipient agencies responsible for carrying out PHP and RRH activities. Assistance for housing that the City provides whether it be ESG or HOPWA ensures a supportive service match that leads households to self-sufficiency during the process of rapid reHousing. The Coordinated Entry & Assessment process through the Continuum of Care (CoC) ensures that housing placements with the appropriate supportive services using Continuum of Care and other mainstream resources targeted to disabled and/or chronically homeless households

ESG - Rapid Re-Housing provides funding towards unaccompanied adults to support first and last months' rent and short-to-medium term rental assistance, depending on the individual needs. To support the housing needs of unaccompanied young adults, ESG Rapid Re-Housing funds support first and last months' rent, short-to-medium term rental assistance and other financial assistance related to rehousing young adults ages 18-24 years.

HOPWA - Funds focus on stabilization in the transition to permanent housing by providing supportive services through case management and permanent housing placement for rapid re-housing. HOPWA supports Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA), which focuses on the attainment of permanent

housing through mobile vouchers. Additional permanent housing is available through facility-based permanent supportive housing programs and Permanent Housing Placement rental start-up assistance.

Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); or, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs.

Needs associated with preventing homelessness for populations City-wide addressed through Strategic Plan Goal 7: Expand Resources for Homeless Prevention. This focus includes housing stabilization case management for some and actual cash assistance for limited utility and rent payments depending on specific household needs (or a combination of both, as assessed by housing providers). The commitment of the actions are supported by HOPWA Short-term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility assistance (STRMU) for over 163 low-income households with a family member or individual that is HIV positive. Housing stabilization needs include referrals, services for special needs and disabled households, skills training and planning for individuals discharged from publicly funded institutions. These goals, accomplished through community partnerships between agencies and in collaboration with the City.

ESG funds for housing stabilization case management for homeless and formerly homeless individuals will accomplish the needs and goals identified, with institutional delivery of services that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, as well as youth needs are also facilitated through coordination and in coalition with the City department and initiatives.

Discussion

With regard to the problems associated with homelessness, the City is addressing the housing and supportive services needs of people who are not homeless but have other special needs. Mental and physical health institutions, elder care organizations and refugee resettlement/immigration service organizations are aware of supportive services and supportive housing resources available through the Coordinated Assessment and Entry process facilitated by the Continuum of Care (CoC). These entities are at the table when discussing Housing and Homelessness Benefits (HHB) at the monthly HHB meetings facilitated by the CoC Lead Agency. Attendance by front line service providers, citizens, current and former recipients of services, affordable housing providers and others.

The City of Worcester and the CoC have a seat at the Community Roundtable on Youth Homelessness, which includes over 25 multi-sector children and youth-serving agencies. Key goals of the roundtable are to reduce youth homelessness by assuring appropriate discharges and transitional care for youth transitioning from the Massachusetts Foster Care System. Representation from the State Department of Children and Families and the Worcester Public Schools is also included.

The Task Force for Sustaining Housing First Solutions has a stated goal to achieve and sustain “functional zero” of adult chronic homelessness in the City. The Tasks Force’ recommendations that actions be

outlined and resources be available necessary to sustain a long-term system of permanent supportive housing within the City of Worcester to end adult chronic homelessness.

The 26 recommendations addressed the five components of the Housing First system:

- Crisis Response
- Housing Supply and Rental Assistance
- Supportive Services
- Housing Stabilization
- Data Driven Decision Making

Rather than creating more shelters, the evidence-based Housing First approach provides people with permanent housing and supportive services, including access to primary and behavioral health services to improve physical health, foster mental health, and reduce alcohol and drug use.

Thoughtful consideration of how to best serve our residents in need of permanent housing and supportive services is the focus.

Assessing and Addressing Acute Risk Behaviors: The City established the HUB initiative. The HUB is a strategic program that combines the efforts of more than 30 local and state organizations to assess and address acute risk behaviors and cases including drug and opioid abuse chronic homelessness, mental health issues, poverty and crime. The HUB is a coordinated mobilization of resources to address individuals or families facing acute levels of elevated risk. The purpose is to lower risk and connect individuals or families to services immediately. A Systems Leader Group (SLG) that is updated by the HUB of any systemic issues that they are seeing oversees the HUB. THE SLG looks in to the data, analyzes trends to identify opportunities for system change.

The City of Worcester’s Department of Health & Human Services provides coordination and management of the City’s critical services in the areas of Public Health, Veterans Services, Human Rights and Disabilities, Elder Affairs and Youth Services. Access to these programs and services associated with people with special needs, streamlined through HHS by providing information, outreach and educational programs for all Worcester residents regardless of age, race, ability or health condition.

AP-70 HOPWA Goals– 91.220 (I)(3)

One year goals for the number of households to be provided housing through the use of HOPWA for:	
Short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance to prevent homelessness of the individual or family	45
Tenant-based rental assistance	109
Units provided in permanent housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds	68

Units provided in transitional short-term housing facilities developed, leased, or operated with HOPWA funds	30
Total	252

AP-75 Barriers to affordable housing – 91.220(j) Introduction:

As a response to the impediments found in the 2020 AI, there was also a list of recommendations on how to address the impediments found. This section describes the efforts to address those impediments.

Actions it planned to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment

The City of Worcester has been doing a tremendous amount of work in relation to affordable and fair housing through multi-pronged initiatives and programs, including those supported by annual HUD entitlement funding. However, the City should also consider focusing on producing a comprehensive affordable housing strategy/policy. Participants in the AI process generally agreed that there is too little coordination between the work of various governmental and quasi-government agencies, nonprofits, and advocacy groups in Worcester. Bringing the myriad of stakeholders together under a coherent, city-wide policy could have a major, beneficial impact. Although not all parties may have the same goals regarding housing production, it may be useful to see what each stakeholder is looking to achieve, and how the efforts could complement each other toward achieving common overall goals in a city wide framework. Within each group there also may be an opportunity to increase coordination in how, where, and what type of affordable housing is produced.

FAIR HOUSING TESTING AND REPORTING

Worcester needs a partner in its efforts to identify, understand, and address housing discrimination. Unfortunately, the development of this AI was severely hampered by the failure of the local testing program at Community Legal Aid to provide data. The City should consider directing its own funds toward improved testing and accountability, if necessary by securing a partner willing to report substantive and detailed data on a predictable schedule.

AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Many people are unaware of their fair housing rights, and many property owners are unaware of their fair housing responsibilities. The City has housing organizations and advocates, but not everyone is working together or working toward commonly understood and agreed-upon outcomes. A City-sponsored and organized annual fair housing conference could go a long way toward building awareness and consensus and positioning the City to take a leadership role in regional fair housing advocacy. The City of Worcester Office of Human rights seems to be the Department best suited to educate the public on Fair Housing Rights issues identified above. Additionally, through both the Human Rights Office, and non-profit partners, the City should coordinate strategic and grassroots outreach efforts to educate, empower, and raise awareness of Fair Housing rights, issues, and concerns. The outreach should have clear, transparent, and measureable annual goals. The items above should be reviewed and strategically incorporated into efforts regarding awareness of Fair Housing Rights.

ZONING & REGULATORY REFORMS

- The City should consider allowing at least two-family density development in all residential districts in Worcester to maximize housing unit supply and opportunity.
- The City should continue efforts to reduce parking minimums and establish flexibility in parking requirements, particularly for multi-family housing and within mixed-use districts.
- The City should amend setback requirements to be more flexible and reflective of actual traditional building forms. For example, many triple decker buildings were historically constructed with little or no front set back, and side yards are often much smaller than what is required. Reducing or eliminating these could increase the value of those units and spur reinvestment opportunities.
- Evaluate whether height limitations are too restrictive, and propose changes as necessary: Many participants cited height restrictions as a key barrier to redeveloping tripledeckers in the city. Dimensional regulations should be reviewed to bring them more in line with the building stock the City actually has.
- The City should explore allowing multi-family development in additional areas of the city – particularly those areas with good transportation access or located in close proximity to mixed use or commercial zones. Comments from realtors and developers suggested that there are not enough areas of the City where new multi-family housing can be built. Additionally, changing the site dimensional requirements (setbacks, parking, etc.) to allow for the demolition and rebuilding of existing three-four family units in existing multi-family districts, would allow more parts of the City to experience multifamily re-development which might be more cost effective and attractive to the current and future market. These
- Existing City demographics, and citizen input, suggest the City should pursue strategies for increasing the availability of both smaller and larger unit sizes. There is significant market demand throughout the City for studio, one bedroom, micro-lofts and even SROs, as well as an under production, and need, for larger family-sized units, especially where public transportation is available.
- The City should consider allowing expanded opportunities to create additional dwelling units within existing buildings in certain circumstances.
- The City should revisit the prohibition on unrelated occupants. Currently the City limits sharing of dwelling units to no more than three unrelated occupants. This policy is said to limit the ability of landlords to fully lease up some properties, especially near colleges. However, the City needs to be mindful of fair housing protections for people with disabilities, such as adults living in group homes or sober houses.
- As the City has experienced a reinvigorated interest by developers for new development projects in the past 5 – 7 years, it should explore the feasibility and potential benefits of implementing an inclusionary zoning requirements, as well as mandatory mixed –income unit requirements for larger

scale new projects that utilize any City financial assistance through tax incentives or other local government funds.

ADDRESSING HOUSING QUALITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD DISINVESTMENT

Worcester has a high number of deteriorated and abandoned properties and many are in neighborhoods where a high proportion of minorities and lower-income residents live. These properties range from old industrial buildings that are fully or partially vacant to poorly maintained and abandoned housing units. The properties have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood by signaling disinvestment, presenting hazards to the neighborhood's residents' safety and health, and creating areas that may attract criminal activity. The existence of deteriorated and abandoned property in neighborhoods decreases property values and limits homeowners' abilities to grow equity in their homes and threatens the health of residents who live in this housing stock.

- Since 2013, using in large part federal entitlement funds like CDBG, the City has experimented with a "targeted" and strategic approach to neighborhood revitalization that has meant significantly investing in the housing and infrastructure of specific neighborhood over a dedicated amount of time. In contrast to

more "scatter shot" approaches of investing in several projects and areas at the same time without any geographic or programmatic focus, this model has shown to be impactful and generate third party investment and cooperation by residents and institutional partners in the revitalization efforts, particularly as there is more certainty and resources brought to bear. A large component of these efforts has also involved improvements and upgrades to the community appearance and community safety. This approach has resulted in more transformative outcomes. The Union Hill neighborhood was the first area where this model was implemented, and the City should continue to implement this model in other low-to moderate income neighborhoods using federal, local, and leveraged private funds.

- The City should study the landscape of options for incentivizing housing maintenance and upgrades. There should be more resources beyond CDBG for interior and exterior repairs, for instance the possibility of a Neighborhood Challenge Grant for owner-matched cosmetic improvements to enhance housing curb appeal, and improve neighborhood identity and image through signage, art, or aesthetic improvements.
- The City needs to reassess its approach to code enforcement. On one hand, strict enforcement may unduly penalize the most vulnerable renters in Worcester, but on the other hand, inconsistent or weak enforcement simply encourages irresponsible landlords to ignore health, safety, and quality-of-life problems faced by their tenants. The City should also consider re-positioning and empowering the Inspectional Services Department to better provide proactive code enforcement, including implementation of a "Rental/Landlord Registry" program that requires landlord owned units to pass inspection before approval for rental, and for reinspection at least yearly. The program could and should also include a landlord training/educational component.

- The City administers a Chapter 139 process whereby dilapidated, abandoned, or unsafe properties that have been repeatedly cited by Code Enforcement become slated for receivership or demolition after the owners have been afforded an administrative hearing and appeal process. Too often properties become “stuck” in this process, with no tangible outcome or improvements expected or made within reasonable time frames. An audit or assessment of said program should be conducted to seek improvements to it, including but not limited to, potential funding pools to assist the owners in rehabbing and re-activating abandoned or unsafe residential units.

HOUSING COST BURDEN AND RACE

It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

FORECLOSURE POLICY

It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

LEAD PAINT ISSUES

The City of Worcester Housing Development Division manages a \$5.6 million HUD lead abatement grant. A requirement of this grant is community outreach to homeowners and landlords. The city has partnered with the Realtor association of Central Massachusetts and Masslandlords in order to improve the communication of the rights and responsibilities of homeowners and landlords to follow both the Massachusetts lead law and well as federal fair housing and lead disclosure standards. Landlords are specifically made aware of their responsibility not to discriminate against tenant with children in order to skirt applicable lead laws. In addition, the program coordinates with both Worcester Headstart and Worcester Public School departments to ensure children under 6 receive lead testing prior to enrolling in school.

NEED FOR ACCESSIBLE UNITS

It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC TRANSIT

It would be a good time to re-vision the transit system and make sure it leverages all resources in the most needed areas. It is also recommended that there is further education and expansion of bicycle transit within the City. It is recommended this topic be added to the list of items requiring further study.

HIV/AIDS HOUSING OPTIONS

An update to the HOPWA Needs Analysis was conducted to determine the current State of the needs so actions can be tailored to relevant data.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The City should reconsider adopting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and establishing a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The City has approved an Affordable Housing Trust Fund and is in process of setting up the committee.

Discussion:

Recommendations can either be categorized as recommendations that can be considered or items that require further study to determine the best course of action.

AP-85 Other Actions – 91.220(k)

Introduction:

Actions planned to address obstacles to meeting underserved needs

Challenges to meeting underserved needs in the coming year stem primarily from increasing demand for program activities combined with decreasing amounts of funding. In order to maximize efficiency and achieve a greater impact, the City proposes the following actions:

- Annually, EOED conducts funding overview and technical assistance workshops for parties interested in applying for HUD entitlement funds through CDBG, HOPWA, and ESG, (usually planned for November). The workshops are designed to focus and facilitate discussion with interested parties in order to define the key social service issues and community needs in Worcester, to identify gaps in service, and to brainstorm potential strategies to address needs and gaps. The workshops were also designed to foster dialogue among agencies/departments to enhance collaboration and the sharing of information.
- Continue to work to improving access to services by persons with limited English proficiency in order to reach underserved populations. According to recent U.S. Census American Community Survey data, 18 percent of the Worcester population speaks a language other than English and speaks English less than “very well.” It is therefore important to ensure that critical programs and services address language and cultural barriers that isolate households and impede successful utilization of community resources. This proposed action includes developing a Language Assistance Plan for HUD Entitlement Programs.

Actions planned to foster and maintain affordable housing

The City will foster the rehabilitation of both rental and owner housing units, as these efforts keep people in affordable housing and may serve to prevent homelessness, especially for extremely low-income and elderly homeowners. The City also prioritizes homeless activities, ranging from the provision of emergency shelter to supportive services that prevent homelessness. Affordable Housing funds will also be prioritized to address the recommendations of the Task Force for Sustaining Housing First Solutions. Overall, the City will focus on multiple efforts to foster and maintain affordable housing,

including rental assistance, rental acquisition and rehabilitation, new owner construction, owner occupied rehabilitation, and down payment assistance for first-time buyers.

Actions planned to reduce lead-based paint hazards

The Worcester Lead Abatement Program (WLAP) was awarded a \$5.6 million Lead Hazard Reduction Grant from the HUD Office of Healthy Homes in 2019 to provide lead paint and soil abatement of low income and very low income housing units, as well as the provision of primary prevention services in the form of outreach and education to low- and moderate-income families with children under age six. Through HUD's Lead Hazard Reduction 2019 funds, the City of Worcester's Housing Division will remediate lead paint hazards in 238 moderate, low and very low income units of housing using \$5,000,000 in lead abatement funds, as well as further remediate 120 of those same units using \$600,000 in Healthy Homes supplemental funding over a 42 month period (01/02/2020 - 06/30/2023). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HUD has awarded the city a 12 month extension to its existing grant. The new grant end date is June 30, 2024.

The City's Housing Development Division (HDD) administers the Worcester Lead Abatement Program which can provide up to \$10,000 per unit to assist with lead abatement in approved properties with low-to moderate-income tenants. HDD also coordinates the Massachusetts "Get the Lead Out" loan program funded by MassHousing for additional abatement assistance over the \$15,000 per unit threshold. Additionally, this grant will be matched by \$603,121 in other public and private resources to further provide lead paint and soil abatement, as well as provide primary prevention services in the form of outreach and education to low and moderate income families with children under age six within the City of Worcester. In addition, any CDBG funded housing rehabilitation project over \$25,000 will be deleaded in conjunction with the rehabilitation activities to take place. For projects between \$5,000 and \$24,999, a lead report will be obtained prior to rehabilitation work taking place. Any area of work that contains lead paint will be conducted using EPA RRP and Massachusetts Lead Safe Renovator standards. The WLAP intends to request a total of \$100,000 in CDBG funding primarily for HUD Lead Hazard Reduction/Healthy Homes matching funding for the current funding year.

Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families

Given the high proportion of residents living in poverty, the City focuses on using its HUD entitlement program funds for initiatives and projects that provide the maximum benefit to very low, low and moderate-income individuals and households. The City's anti-poverty strategy seeks to support programs that provide job and life skills training and other advancement opportunities, and is part of a coordinated effort to create jobs and improve the local economy. This two-pronged approach helps families achieve and maintain economic security and self-sufficiency. In addition, EOED will continue coordinating with the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) around programs and initiatives that support the City's goal of reducing poverty.

Actions planned to develop institutional structure

Coordinated Entry for Homeless Persons is convened by the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc. (CMHA), the lead agency for the Continuum of Care (CoC) in partnership with the City of Worcester and CoC agencies. The purpose of the Coordinated Entry system is to improve the quality of the CoC and greater Worcester's homeless housing and service system, and to improve outcomes for individuals and families in the continuum that are threatened with or experiencing homelessness. Two Work Groups convene bi-weekly to develop the coordinated entry policy, with one group focused on the needs of homeless families and the other on homeless individuals (including veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth). The work groups implement processes that prioritize individuals and families with the greatest needs (especially chronically homeless households) for housing and service assistance, and attempt to minimize barriers to entry because of lack of employment or income, drug or alcohol use, or having a criminal record. The City and the CoC encourage a Housing First model, but recognize that some housing and service resources are required by funding agencies or providers to give preferences to certain populations including sub-groups determined by age, disability, gender, or community problem.

The Coordinated Entry system ensures appropriate access to housing based on individual needs and assessments, and promotes effective referrals and partnerships throughout the homeless services system.

Community partners at the heart of the overall institutional structure, including those that serve homeless and non-homeless populations, have cited gaps in the coordination, collaboration, and information sharing among organizations responsible for program delivery. In particular, the consultation process highlighted a need to increase awareness of existing resources amongst organizations. This gap influences the referral system for clients, and consequently affects the ability of low- and moderate income residents to access other critical resources in the community. As a result, the City will support information and referral and direct case management services that help connect low- and moderate-income residents to much needed social and human services.

Actions planned to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies

A number of local and regional agencies, non-profit organizations, and service providers engaged in the consultative process that informs this Action Plan. EOED will capitalize on these relationships to enhance coordination, as well as continue to work collaboratively with various municipal departments to maximize the use of limited resources to address the needs of low- and moderate-income residents. In addition, the City will continue to actively participate in ongoing efforts to enhance coordination with private industry, businesses, developers, and social service agencies in order to foster economic development. EOED, for example, plays a leadership role in the Worcester Business Resource Alliance (WBRA), a centralized network of business professionals, technical assistance providers, lenders, and

community development organizations that collectively provide services to entrepreneurs and small business owners and managers.

Discussion:

Through The Cloudburst Group, the HOPWA agencies were able to receive 6 one hour Technical assistance sessions that touched on program management issues and left opportunity for further Q & A.

Program Specific Requirements AP-90

Program Specific Requirements – 91.220(l)(1,2,4)

Introduction:

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Reference 24 CFR 91.220(l)(1)

Projects planned with all CDBG funds expected to be available during the year, identified in the Projects Table. The following identifies program income that is available for use that is included in projects to be carried out.

1. The total amount of program income that will have been received before the start of the next program year and that has not yet been reprogrammed	75,000
2. The amount of proceeds from section 108 loan guarantees that will be used during the year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the grantee's strategic plan.	0
3. The amount of surplus funds from urban renewal settlements	0
4. The amount of any grant funds returned to the line of credit for which the planned use has not been included in a prior statement or plan	0
5. The amount of income from float-funded activities	0
Total Program Income:	75,000

Other CDBG Requirements

1. The amount of urgent need activities	0
2. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit - A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan.	96.22%

HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) Reference 24 CFR 91.220(I)(2)

1. A description of other forms of investment being used beyond those identified in Section 92.205 is as follows:

No other forms of investment are currently being used beyond those identified in Section 92.205

2. A description of the guidelines that will be used for resale or recapture of HOME funds when used for homebuyer activities as required in 92.254, is as follows:

The City is not currently using HOME Investment Partnership Program funds for homebuyer assistance activities. In the event of resale of a property where there is not a direct subsidy to the homebuyer, the City uses a Resale Provision to preserve the remaining affordability period to ensure the housing is retained for occupancy for low-income households. The Resale Provision requires that if the owner of an income restricted property sells, conveys, or transfers his/her ownership interest in the property prior to the end of the minimum federally-required affordability period, the sale, conveyance, or transfer shall only be to an eligible, income-qualified purchaser. Other restrictions concerning notice of sale, maximum resale price, and marketing of affordable unit(s) shall apply and are fully detailed in the City's Resale Provision.

3. A description of the guidelines for resale or recapture that ensures the affordability of units acquired with HOME funds? See 24 CFR 92.254(a)(4) are as follows:

The purchaser must occupy the property as his/her principal residence throughout the period of affordability. For projects that are subject to a resale provision, the period of affordability is determined by the amount of the amount of direct subsidy (defined below) to the homebuyer, as follows:

- 5 years for individual projects receiving between \$1,000 and \$14,999 in Housing Fund assistance per unit; and
- 10 years for individual project receiving between \$15,000 and \$40,000 in Housing Fund assistance per unit; and
- 15 years for individual project receiving more than \$40,000 in Housing Fund assistance per unit.

While long-term affordability can be accomplished through either recapture or resale provisions, the City has elected to impose resale provisions on all HOME-assisted homeownership projects.

HOME Resale Affordability Provisions

The HOME resale requirements are established in the HOME rule at §92.254(a)(5)(i). Under HOME resale provisions, the City is required to ensure that, when a HOME-assisted homebuyer sells his or her property, either voluntarily or involuntarily, during the affordability period:

1. The property is sold to another HOME eligible low-income homebuyer who will use the property as his or her principal residence. Resale of the property during the affordability period and qualification of subsequent buyers will be governed by the HOME covenant and land use restriction on the property;
2. The original homebuyer receives a fair return on investment, (i.e., the homebuyer's down payment plus capital improvements made to the house); and
3. The property is sold at a price that is "affordable to a reasonable range of low-income buyers". This maximum limit would be set at the HOME Homeownership Value Limits published by HUD found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/2312/home-maximum-purchase-price-afterrehabvalue/>

Affordability Period:

Under resale, §92.254(a)(5)(i) of the HOME rule states that the period of affordability is based on the total amount of HOME funds invested in the housing. In other words, the total HOME funds expended for the unit determines the applicable affordability period. Any HOME program income used to assist the project is included when determining the period of affordability under a resale provision.

4. Plans for using HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing that is rehabilitated with HOME funds along with a description of the refinancing guidelines required that will be used under 24 CFR 92.206(b), are as follows:

The City of Worcester does not currently intend to use HOME funds to refinance existing debt currently secured with HOME funds.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Reference 91.220(I)(4)

1. Include written standards for providing ESG assistance (may include as attachment)
Written standards, provided as an attachment to this plan.
2. If the Continuum of Care has established centralized or coordinated assessment system that meets HUD requirements, describe that centralized or coordinated assessment system.

Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc. (CMHA), the convening lead agency for the Continuum of Care (CoC) in partnership with the City of Worcester and CoC agencies Coordinated Entry for Homeless Persons. The purpose of Coordinated Entry is to improve the quality of the CoC and greater Worcester's homeless housing and service system, and to improve outcomes for individuals and families in the Continuum that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Two Working Groups convene bi weekly to develop the coordinated entry policy, with one group focused on the needs of homeless families and the other on homeless individuals (including Veterans and their

families, and unaccompanied youth). The working groups implement processes that prioritize individuals and families with the greatest needs (especially chronically homeless households) for housing and service assistance, and attempt to identify and minimize barriers to entry including lack of employment or income, drug or alcohol use, or criminal record. The City and the CoC encourage a Housing First model, but recognize that some housing and service providers give preference to certain populations based upon age, disability status, gender or community problem.

The Coordinated Entry system ensures appropriate access to housing based on individual needs and assessments, and promotes effective referrals and partnerships throughout the homeless services system.

3. Identify the process for making sub-awards and describe how the ESG allocation available to private nonprofit organizations (including community and faith-based organizations).

Please see attached the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Emergency Solutions Grant Program Request for Proposals, which explains the process for making sub-awards and how the funds are allocated to private nonprofit organizations. The City allocates and administers ESG funds to private nonprofit agencies via executed contracts, as recommended by the Emergency Solutions Grant Advisory Committee, the Continuum of Care, and as approved by the City Manager and City Council of Worcester.

4. If the jurisdiction is unable to meet the homeless participation requirement in 24 CFR 576.405(a), the jurisdiction must specify its plan for reaching out to and consulting with homeless or formerly homeless individuals in considering policies and funding decisions regarding facilities and services funded under ESG.

The City has a homeless or formerly homeless person serving as a voting member on the Emergency Solutions Grant Advisory Committee. Additionally, members of the CoC Board and diverse funding partners with knowledge of existing needs and resources in the community, such as the United Way, contribute to recommendations for making sub awards for ESG. This year, direct service providers also participated as committee members to share insight into how ESG funded projects are working on a practical level. In the past 5 years, ESG funds have been allocated for prevention, rapid rehousing, street outreach and emergency shelter operations to serve major sub populations represented in our community. The decision to allocate funds to these activities is greatly informed by the gaps and resources currently available through the federal HEARTH act in consultation with the CoC Board, and further informed by “on the ground” feedback in regard to how certain programs are filling service gaps in the community.

The CoC Board is staffed according to HUD's requirements, including: broad geographical representation, formerly homeless individuals, the City of Worcester as ESG recipient agency, veterans services, homeless assistance providers, mental health providers, social service providers, victims services providers, faith based organizations, hospitals, higher education, government, and the public housing authority. The role of this entity is as follows:

- Identifies emerging or changing needs among homeless individuals and families and recommends new resources to best address those needs.
- Implements and supports policies that ensure the best use of available resources for the homeless population through a coordinated assessment and entry system
- Makes decisions on applications for new and/or renewed project funding based on a specific set of review criteria including monitoring and evaluation of specific program performance and documentation of an effective and transparent prioritization of resources to those with the greatest need.

The CoC Board’s input, based on its characteristics highlighted above, considered significantly in the ESG funding recommendation process. Based on feedback, the funding recommendation process, the ESG grant administrator explained the scoring and ranking process to make it more intuitive and straightforward, encouraging participation by individuals and residents who don’t have extensive experience reading through grant proposals, but have valuable insight into the service system in Worcester. There were also presentations by each applicant to let them explain what they do for the community in their own words. Voices of direct service providers this year have proven valuable to the process, and a simplification of the process will facilitate more input from the community.

5. Describe performance standards for evaluating ESG.

As part of the process of allocating ESG funds through the City’s RFP process, there are established performance standards to evaluate ESG program sub-recipients. Under the “Project Narrative & Description” section, sub-recipients provide a method for tracking clients, measured through recording individual client or household level data. Sub-recipients predict the unduplicated number of families/persons that will benefit from the activity (output) and the cost to provide the service. Desk monitoring occurs with every payment request submission. On a quarterly basis, ESG subrecipients submit HMIS generated Performance Reports to measure progress alongside financial drawdowns for each project.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)

Discussion

Please see attached the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 HOPWA Grant Program - Request for Proposals, which explains the process for making sub-awards and how funds are allocated to private nonprofit organizations. The City allocates and administers HOPWA funds to private nonprofit agencies via executed contracts, as recommended by the HOPWA Advisory Committee, the Continuum of Care, and as approved by the City Manager and City Council of Worcester.